FRATERNITY ROW

LYNN & LOIS MONTROSS

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FRATERNITY ROW

LYNN *and* LOIS MONTROSS

By Lynn and Lois Montross

FRATERNITY ROW
TOWN AND GOWN

By Lois Seyster Montross

AMONG THOSE PRESENT (in preparation)
THE CRIMSON CLOAK

By Lynn Montross

EAST OF EDEN
HALF GODS

FRATERNITY ROW

BY

LYNN *and* LOIS MONTROSS

NEW YORK
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FRATERNITY ROW
— A —
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To

ISABEL M. SEYSTER

FOREWORD

It is curious that the University, while gazing thoughtfully across the centuries at Gawain and Beowulf, has overlooked such a hero of folk lore on its own campus as Andy Protheroe. The legends of Fraternity Row are unknown to doctors who can give a learned description of Valhalla; and Andy Protheroe is a mere name to deans who have analyzed Roland's lightest words. Yet there is a striking similarity between the Andy legends and these older tales, even though styles in armor and in women have changed. There is heraldry on Fraternity Row as exacting as the heraldry of Astolat. There is as much verisimilitude in the exploits of Andy as in the deeds of Tristram.

Like the heroes of most sagas Andy is not only a person —he is a symbol. He embodies the insouciance—the spirit of young absurdity—which the University is so capably dispelling from its campus. The shadow of mournfulness which sometimes lightly touches Andy's brow rests there because he is a vanishing jester rapidly being routed by the admirably sober forces of eclectic standardization. The deans, the parents, the legislators, the good doctors do not like Andy; and Andy's youthful contemporaries often deplore him as a distressing mutant. He loves gaiety and rhythm and color and nonsense, and these elements are even more dangerous than intelligence to those huge business firms customarily called universities.

If Andy were not already vanishing and becoming a tradition it would be improper to set down these legends concerning him. Perhaps some of them hold but little truth; perhaps the few who still tell Protheroe stories in

front of a fireplace here and there on Fraternity Row are not quite accurate historians. We have tried to present only the more credible tales. And so that he may move against a plausible background we have interwoven other episodes in which Andy's environment instead of Andy, himself, appears.

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First Episode:
THE ANTIQUATED SHEIK

From the Descriptive Bulletin of the State University:

> *All students are extended an opportunity at a nominal fee to attend various lectures arranged during the year by the Department of English.*

I: *The Antiquated Sheik*

NO senior ball committee without Andy Protheroe's name like that ancient Adhem's leading all the rest. No stadium drive without Andy's suave oratory moving delinquents to belated generosity. No college magazine without Andy's old wisecracks (freshened up with new drawings) and Andy's rich, racy comments on Broadway mammas and dimpled knees, thinly disguised as dramatic criticism.

He was one of those perpetual seniors, always within a paltry credit of graduating, who return to the campus each fall, brisk and gay and confident of social power. His latest motor extravaganza was never parked in front of any but the most national of national sororities. His raccoon coat, his garterless socks, his meticulous cravats, his fluent line, his flawless dancing! Indubitably he was a gentleman of the school variously known as Slickers, Lizards, Fussers, Snakes, Tea-Hounds, Neckers, or Sheiks. And then one evening he discovered that he was a gentleman of the old school . . . one of those antiquated sheiks with a passé fondness for light amusement.

The young literati were in the saddle riding high horses of free verse and Freud. And for the first time in his life Andy Protheroe felt wistful.

The A. O. G. dance had begun as other dances: Chaperons relegated to the easy chairs, jazz band playing *Yes Sir, That's My Baby!* Brother Gildersleeve unctuously adding liquor to the punch, Brother Fatleigh telling his story about the old maid in the upper berth, tons of powder spilled in the guest rooms, feminine laughter and flimsy gowns . . . but in an hour Andy noticed that

only the freshmen and two red-faced football men were dancing. The prettiest girls had disappeared. The saxophone player was languishing for want of appreciation. Where were the shrieks, the balloons, the moonlight numbers, the encores, the frivolities of yesteryear?

Andy led the little Pi Phi pledge who had been doing the Charleston with him out upon the broad veranda. There in calm groups lounged the elect of the University, talking and smoking as if music were a background instead of a stimulant to the feet.

Confidently Andy joined the first circle, pulling up a chair for his beautiful pledge and seating himself on the arm of it. He expected everybody to fall silent—why not? For years his gaudy polysyllables had won him instant audiences and fatuous applause.

But in the shadows a girl's voice continued to drawl: ". . . a quality of fleetness. His verse skims along the surface of life with the sophisticated swiftness of a—a—"

"A bootlegger on Lake Champlain," suggested Andy brightly.

Somebody said "Sh-h-h," and the voice continued firmly:

"—of a Wilde or any of that older decadent group. And yet he is not a decadent, do you think so?"

"If you are talking," said Andy, "of that corpulent bluepoint I recklessly and wilfully swallowed last week, he is."

"Oh, be yourself!" cried the lovely Pi Phi pledge, giggling delightedly. But everybody else frowned and said "Sh-h-h!" again.

In the flare of the cigarette he was lighting, Andy saw the face of the girl in the shadows and it was a good face —not at all the kind of a face you would expect a highbrow to have. In fact, it was the face of Phoebe Fairlie, who had, as Andy put it, blossomed from last year's dubious freshman into this year's knockout. She was already one of those scintillant stars that rise suddenly

on campus horizons; the ink is scarcely dry on their registration blanks before their engagement books read like telephone directories; one of these carelessly stunning creatures who annoy the deans and beguile the young male instructors . . . straight yellow hair and straight red mouth; inhaled her cigarettes and never used a holder; eyes a baffling color, perhaps lapis lazuli; neither overbuilt nor underbuilt, and tall with a little slouch that seemed to deprecate the extravagance of her clothes.

Weeks ago Andy had so catalogued her. Weeks ago he had set her aside in his mind as a goal to be leisurely approached. He would not hurry about calling her up. She must first observe his fickleness with other women, dream of him, desire his attentions. Then he would calmly appropriate her for the rest of the year, invite her to lead the spring prom with him, and . . . but would he?

What was all this tripe she was talking about verse and fleetness and decadence?

He felt uneasy and annoyed. Sulkily he began to snap his fingers and hum *Yes Sir, That's My Baby!* Inside, the saxophone was wailing it, a luscious jazz cacophony that made his toes feel eccentric and gave his very heart a beat of syncopation. (Ah, where were those dear, dumb girls of yesteryear who used to tug at his coat-sleeve, pleading, "Come and shake your wicked hoof with me, Andy!")

"Of course you know *The Aching Void,* Phoebe?" said young Podhurst—that crashing bore whom Andy had only allowed to become an A. O. G. because the house funds were so damned low.

"Of course!" sighed Phoebe, flicking the ash from her cigarette with a languid gesture.

Andy stubbornly put in again: "I had an aching void once. The dentist filled it with porcelain or gunmetal, I forget which."

"Dumb!" giggled the pledge. Andy wished she would keep out of this. She had no idea that he was battling the literati single-handed.

"Can you repeat it?" said Podhurst in a low voice that tried to exclude jazz and all vulgar interlopers. In a sad, monotonous sing-song Phoebe chanted:

I can carry a sword like a flaming fruit,
I can carry a dream or a crimson sin,
I can carry the moon to the end of the world
Where songs are ended and sighs begin . . .
But how shall I carry a dreamless heart,
And how shall I carry the void within?

"Exquisite," murmured Podhurst, closing his eyes.

"Your moaning intrigues me strangely," said Andy. "Moan some more jingles. What was the meter—limerick hexameter?"

"It is by Lionel Mount," said Podhurst in a patronizing voice that whipped the blood into Andy's face. Then the young literatus bent toward Phoebe again: "I have it copied on an old piece of parchment, framed in a small, carved case. . . . I wonder if you will think it is awfully stupid of me . . . but, do you know, I unlock it every night, read it, and then lock it up again. Would you care to see it?"

The group rose. They were all going to troop upstairs in a solemn body to gaze at a piece of parchment . . . and meantime all that good jazz going to waste!

Andy's whole world was toppling. He made a last insolent thrust at his enemies. "And I've got something to show you, Phoebe," he said in a facile burlesque of Podhurst's eager voice. "Six quarts of Black and White in a small, carved case. I unlock it every night, smell it, and then lock it up again. Would you care to see it?"

As she passed, Phoebe looked down at him with a vague, indulgent smile. Her green and silver dress swirled carelessly against him—a faint sweet perfume like an April night—twist of white shoulders and lift of small, close-cropped head . . . she was gone. And for the second time in his life Andy Protheroe felt wistful.

II

He awoke the next morning with a headache and what was worse, the panicky realization that new, strange powers were afoot on the campus endangering the social stratum. In his palmy days a girl who talked of poetry at a fraternity dance would have been labeled impossible—but you couldn't label Phoebe Fairlie impossible. Neither could you boycott poetry or highbrow conversation when once it had been sanctioned by the inner circle. And deep in Andy's heart lay a bitter, small-boy pain caused by the knowledge that nobody had waited for his sanction. For years he had dictated all elite customs in slang, apparel and dance steps and now he was ignored, perhaps pitied, as a dethroned monarch, an outré tea-hound, an extinct lizard!

He saw Phoebe that afternoon at the Campus Soft Drink Parlor. She was sitting in a dimly lighted booth, smoking and sipping a coke, with young Podhurst and the associate editor of *The Lame Duck* across the table. In his pale, thin voice Podhurst was reading some awful stuff that he had written in a large black notebook.

Summoning every drop of his nonchalance, Andy strolled over and appropriated the seat beside Phoebe. "I'm only a poor College of Commerce student," he said with mock humility. "Your genius cramps my style, Poddy. I can't take free verse without a chaser, so let's talk about angleworms or something pleasant."

"Poor Andy," said Phoebe, patting his head with her cool white hand. "He just doesn't know what it's all about."

"I do," said Andy, "but I don't want to tell—not in front of a lady." A swift thrill had raced over him at the touch of her fingers. He felt daring again and arrogantly reckless.

Podhurst and his friend scrambled to their feet; they were scowling and muttering something about a "mean

crack" and "crashing the gate." As they left the booth Andy gazed calmly after them, noting the shirt collars they wore open in Byronic style, exposing their long, thin necks—their unpressed trousers, their bone-rimmed spectacles.

"My God!" he said.

"Why?" said Phoebe.

"Your boy-friends distress me," said Andy, putting a gentle, winning quality into his voice. He wound a tuft of the gray fur at her wrist around his finger and then carefully unwound it again. "Why do you bore yourself with those asses?" he asked earnestly.

She laughed with a touch of annoyance. "They're awfully clever," she said.

"I, too, am clever," said Andy, becoming his grandiose self again. He was never at his best unless he was alone with a woman. "But I pitch my cleverness to the lilt of jazz and the gurgle of spirituous likker. I like gaiety and *hors d'oeuvres* and puns. We are only young once," he said eloquently. "Let us not waste our youth among the garbage cans of modern verse. Let us neck, drink and make wisecracks, for tomorrow we may graduate."

Her eyes were a frosty blue (instead of lapis lazuli, as once he had thought) behind the mist of cigarette smoke, alluring blue made warm by the flush of her cheeks and the sweep of her slanting eyebrows. Andy's heart beat fast with a sense of triumph. He stroked her smooth wrist lightly with one of his fingers. Their eyes met . . . and hers wavered before the unfaltering tensity of his look. He pressed the palm of her hand against his mouth and found that her hand trembled a little.

"Phoebe," he said in a voice that he forced to be casual, "I'm giving a dance at the Country Club a week from Saturday. I'm giving it for you because no dance should ever be given except for you. Will you come?"

"Oh!" she said in astonishment. "Why, of course, Andy. How darling of you."

He rose immediately, saying that he had a class, and

went out leaving her to pay for the drink. He also lounged in the door of the pool-room as she went by a little later so that she would see that he did not really have a class.

His impulsive project of giving a dance at the Country Club kept him so occupied that week that he was almost happy. Only a few times did he allow himself to make scathing remarks to Podhurst and his cohorts, and when he encountered the supercilious stares of the rest of the innumerable literati who overran the campus with their Byronic collars and hectic manuscripts, Andy disguised the black rage in his heart with a cool, amused smile. He did not even protest violently when he dropped in at Ted Allison's apartment one evening and found that it had been transformed into a Greenwich Village studio with batik at the windows and three empty easels trying to look prominent and businesslike.

"Who paints?" he inquired politely but with a cold shudder in his slicker-soul. For Ted Allison was one of the good old guard, the dear old guard who had shaken a mean heel and a meaner cocktail.

"A couple of Sig Alphs and myself," explained Ted, "thought it would be interesting to express ourselves—no stuffy technique or conventions, you know—just painting things as we see them."

"Do you paint the thing as you see it for the God of things as they are or for the God of things as they aren't?" said Andy. He'd show 'em he was no lowbrow. He'd taken Rhetoric 41 and could titillate the old Muse himself, if that was what they wanted.

Ted groaned. "Oh, but that's Kipling, you know, Protheroe. Mustn't quote Kipling. Isn't done any more."

It was then that Andy restrained himself from violence. He merely rose and wandered desolately out to his car, seeking lonesomely in its high-powered turbulence to drive away his own turbulence and perplexity.

III

News of Andy's country club dance spread rapidly about the campus. The literati sneered but they were impressed by the proportions of his plans in spite of themselves. Morehouse's Colored Jazz Orchestra was coming from Chicago. There were tales of cocktails flowing like punch, taxicabs to be sent for all the guests, expensive favors, novel decorations and the revival of the banned moonlight dance. All of the chaperons were chosen from the College of Commerce and among the guests there was nobody who wrote poetry—except Phoebe Fairlie.

Podhurst tried desperately to scoff her out of attending. "You'll perish in the midst of those Rotarians, you know."

She laughed gayly. "Oh, for one evening! I'm going to forget that I'm anything but a foolish flapper—I'm going to dance the soles off my shoes, Pod."

After two days' thought he concocted a brilliant plan for Andy's overthrow. It necessitated the co-operation of Scribbler's Club, the approval of the Department of English, the affirmation of Lionel Mount. When Podhurst had got all three, he sighed with relief and then he sought out Phoebe. He found her preoccupied, for she had just received the new, glittering gown that she was going to wear to Andy's dance and she was joyously racing around the town now finding the exact slippers and stockings and the perfect shade of titian for her fan.

"I've only got a minute," she said breathlessly, glancing at her jeweled wrist watch. "I've got to take these slippers back before the stores close—they're not the right color and——"

"This is very important," said Podhurst, nervously smoothing his thin hair back from his bumpy forehead.

"Oh, but I *can't!*" she cried when he had finished his

long recital. "Why—the dance is in honor of me! Andy would be sick if—if I didn't——"

"For the sake of one illiterate Babbitt," said Podhurst querulously, "you would prevent our campus from receiving the visit of the most distinguished man of letters in the country. The only evening he can give us is this coming Saturday night. I don't want to think you are disloyal to our group, Phoebe, but what else can anybody think?"

"But, *Pod!*" she protested, unhappily twisting her hands together. "You mustn't let it rest with me. You can have the lecture—just the same—even if I'm away dancing."

"No," he said in a tone of finality. "If you won't help to sponsor his lecture and give all your thought and time in helping entertain him while he is here, the whole thing will fall through. We can't make a success of it without you, Phoebe, and you know it. Of course the Department of English will be terribly disappointed in you. But then it's not my business if you prefer an asinine dance to a lecture by Lionel Mount——"

"Oh, I don't, Pod," she cried, nearly weeping at the thought of Andy's disappointment (and he is such a boy, she thought, so eager and gay and ingenuous). "Write to Mr. Mount, then, that it's all right . . . and I'll telephone Andy to postpone his dance till next week."

Her hand was unsteady as she held the receiver and heard his blithe greeting over the wire. "Did you get the gold slippers or the ones with buckles on 'em?" he asked interestedly.

It nearly broke her heart to tell him, and her lips were so stiff that her voice rang faintly cold like a thin coin.

"Postpone it?" repeated Andy, keeping his tone suave although the sudden, chagrined tears stung his eyes. "This isn't that kind of a dance, my pretty maid—postponement is not part of its curriculum. We give only courses in speed, jazz and excitement, and nothing short of a broken saxophone can stop our heels from wriggling

now." His voice plunged on in uncontrollably wild phrases—she could only hear his courteous savagery coming in broken bits now, for she was crying . . . "— please politely ignore our more vulgar form of revelry" . . . "if you apply yourself diligently . . . to the batik-hung Parnassus" . . . "you may yet attain to bone-rimmed spectacles."

At last she blindly hung up the receiver and stared at the telephone a long time with the frightened feeling that Andy's rhetoric was still overwhelming the defenseless wires.

Andy Protheroe had run the gamut of many diverse emotions in his campus career but he had never experienced the sense of humiliation that sickened him now. He felt as if the pit of his stomach had dropped out, leaving him a hollow creature who would collapse at a pin prick. He knew how a balloon feels when it is punctured. He knew how a candle feels when it is blown out.

He knew as surely as he knew how to flunk economics that this episode meant exit for Andy Protheroe on the campus stage. No more music, no more applause, no more footlights . . . a ludicrous departure into the cold wings with laughter and hissing from the audience . . . and after that an ignominious seat in the gallery while other favorites, other stars won generous plaudits from the mob.

He drew a long, quivering breath and clenched his hands. He thought of withdrawing from school. He thought of going out and driving his car at a devil's pace until it ended in a dramatic smash-up. He thought of hunting up Podhurst and cramming him into his little carved case and locking him there until he died of suffocation. He thought of many other insanities, realizing all the time that none of these mad ideas could help him or abate his ignominy. He wished he could stay in the telephone booth forever. But in a moment he would have to open the door and go out looking as if nothing had happened. He would have to go to his classes, he would

have to face the curious eyes, the amused smiles . . . hear it whispered over the campus: *"He gave a dance for Phoebe Fairlie and she went to a lecture instead."*

Suddenly he turned to the telephone and wrenched the receiver again from its hook. He called up the little pledge and invited her brusquely to attend the dance with him. And all the time that she was fluttering and gasping her delighted answer he hated her and wished that she were dead. . . .

IV

Lionel Mount was a tall, bony man of about forty, with a drooping, straw-colored moustache and round, child-like eyes. His day on the campus had been, to say the least, a bit tiring. As soon as he arrived he had been whirled dizzily about the campus while the other five occupants of the car simultaneously pointed out the new chemistry building, the new stadium, the new animal husbandry building, the new public speaking hall, the old and apologetic library. After that he had met a few deans, four professors and the head of the English Department, and then he was whisked away to luncheon where he was able to snatch only a few mouthfuls as he was expected to keep up a brilliant conversation with a pretty, yellow-haired girl on his left and an eager, thin-faced aesthete on his right. Immediately ensuing were a tea and a banquet where he autographed four or five hundred volumes of his verses and responded affably to the same remark repeated by everybody he talked to: "I want to tell you how fond I am of your verse, Mr. Mount!"

At last he was taken to the A. O. G. house where he was to dress and, after his lecture, stay the night.

There he dropped wearily into a deep, comfortable divan hoping for a few minutes of peace in which to rest his throbbing head. But instantly he was surrounded by

the brothers of the order—upper classmen with literary aspirations who sat respectfully around him waiting for sparkling aphorisms to drop from his tired lips.

Obediently he followed Podhurst upstairs to see the poem written on parchment in the small, carved case, and after admiring it he followed Podhurst downstairs again to the living room, which was now crowded with six more visitors who were all fond of Mount's poetry.

The associate editor of *The Lame Duck* confidently opened the conversation.

"How do you write your verse, Mr. Mount? Do you revise it continually or do you find that the first draft usually pleases you?"

"I—er—revise it," said Mr. Mount. "I find, don't you know, that revision is—er—desirable."

"H'm," said the associate editor of *The Lame Duck,* nodding solemnly and respectfully as if this were a new, lofty thought.

"May I ask a personal question?" said Podhurst with that air of intimacy which comes from having lunched next to a celebrity. "Do you feel that you are allied with any particular school of verse? The Expressionists—?" He waved his hand vaguely.

"Oh yes, the Expressionists," murmured Mr. Mount, also looking vague. "Let us dismiss them. They exist, if I may say so, expressly for the purpose of being dismissed."

Then he glanced around in an abashed way hoping that this weary and feeble witticism might go unnoticed. But there was a loud shout of laughter. They found Mr. Mount very witty indeed. "That's great," they all said like a Greek chorus. Then they laughed again and waited for him to say something else.

At this moment Andy Protheroe came in. He was in a faultless dinner jacket, for this was the night of his dance. His blond hair shone sleekly, his moustache was clipped to a frail line; and he entered with his suavest smile, his most arrogant bearing.

Nobody made any motion to introduce him to the celebrity.

"Mr. Mount, I believe," said Andy, crossing the room with outstretched hand in the best old-school manner of fraternity cordiality. "Protheroe is my name. Glad to have you with us. Hope you'll toddle in often now you've found the place. Speaking of banalities, did you ever hear that rich, ripe jest about the traveling man who——"

Podhurst wedged himself in between them and said in a cold voice as if there had been no interruption, "But Expressionism is on the wane now, is it not, Mr. Mount?"

"Speaking of banalities," repeated Andy, looking pointedly at Podhurst, "I was just going to tell Mr. Mount of a most luscious exchange of humor between a traveling man and a waitress. You see, the traveling man had entered the restaurant and ordered clams——"

The A. O. G.'s looked frozen with prurient horror. Podhurst desperately interrupted again. "Sorry, Protheroe, but Mr. Mount was just discussing Expressionism."

The poet gazed at Andy with a look of piteous appeal.

"I'm afraid," said Andy, "that the deplorable overpopulation here makes it a bit difficult for us to chat comfortably. Would you care to come up to my room, sir? I have," he added genially as he took the poet's arm, "a pretty little carved case with something in it I think you might like to see." The poet's face fell a little, but he followed in his rescuer's wake while a low buzz of furious denouncements of Andy came from the brothers left with no lion to lionize.

Up in Andy's luxurious room Lionel Mount sank into a low, cushioned chair. "If you don't mind," he said, "I don't believe I'm quite up to looking at any more carved cases. I saw Mr. Podwerp's," he added sulkily.

"Oh, take a look at mine," said Andy, grinning as he unlocked the trunk. "This is a case of a different species." And he brought forth two bottles of Scotch. Then he bolted the door of the room against intruders,

took off his coat and carefully filled two water glasses. "Say when, Mr. Mount."

"When," said Mr. Mount, and his voice quavered in its enthusiasm.

"Will you have a chaser, Mr. Mount?"

"No chaser," said Mr. Mount buoyantly.

They touched glasses. "Us two and no more," said Andy.

"Us two," echoed Mr. Mount with feeling.

V

As Andy replenished the glasses the poet leaned forward with a bright gleam of interest in his round, child-like eyes. "Oh yes, what was that story you were going to tell me about the traveling man——?"

"Oh, that!" said Andy, drawing his chair nearer. "Yes, you see it was like this. . . ."

Lionel Mount took off his coat, lit his pipe and related four stories funnier than the one Andy had told. He was becoming more jovial each moment. And unostentatiously, with meticulous attention to equality, Andy filled up the glasses again.

After that interlude the poet smiled quizzically and tapped Andy on the arm. "Fond of verse?" he queried. "Fond of my verse?"

"I regret to say," said Andy, "that I have not read your verse and I have no intention of reading it."

"Thank God!" said the poet. He wrung Andy's hand. There was a suspicion of moisture in his eyes. "Good scout," he insisted with emotion. "You're a regular guy. A good—yes, a good scout. I don't care for these other —these other lit'ry, these other lit'ry——"

"Eggs," prompted Andy.

"Yes, eggs." The poet laughed boisterously. "Yes, eggs. An excellent epitaph. Epithet? Epitaph. Epitaph?"

"Epithet," said Andy gently.

After the subsequent interlude in which Andy again filled the glasses with unerring impartiality, the poet felt braced for still more stimulating conversation.

"What's happened to the campus, old man? The campus everywhere. It's not the same—not the same atall—as when I was young. What's matter with the old college life?"

"It's these damned literati, sir," said Andy, growing even more courteous as the bottle grew lighter. "They infest our universities like vermin. They should be stamped out. The Department of English viciously lures the innocent freshmen who know not what they do . . . and the College of Commerce is helpless. It cannot so much as lift a hand, sir, to save these poor young men and women from literature."

"A regrettable condition," said the poet. "Sad, that's what it is. Ver', ver' sad." He stretched out slothfully in his chair and blinked affectionately at the keeper of the bottle.

For some time there had been an insistent thumping at the door and now Andy rose to shout through the key-hole, "Please don't disturb us. Mr. Mount is preparing for his lecture."

Outside, there was a muttered colloquy, then Podhurst growled appealingly, "But what the hell, Andy! He's half an hour late now."

"Go on to the auditorium," said Andy. "Mr. Mount and I will join you there when we find time."

As he heard their retreating footsteps he turned back to the poet. Lionel Mount had caught the word "lecture" and an uneasy, annoyed look had spread over his blurring features.

"Lecture?" he mumbled. "Oh yes . . . and notes. Where's my notes? Mus' be in other clothes. But I'm not dressed yet." He gazed mournfully at Andy and his face brightened with a clever idea. "You're dressed. You go and give my lecture. What say, ol' man? Will

you or won't you? That's what I'm asking—will you or won't you? Will you or will you?"

Contemplating the poet's distressful condition, Andy had a swift thrill of pride that drinking glass for glass he had survived the bout with only a fine sense of exhilaration. He had intended Lionel Mount to go on and make a mess of his lecture, but as he looked down into the poet's trustful, affectionate eyes Andy knew that no gentleman could pursue such an inhospitable course.

"Let us forget lectures and such garbage," he said gayly. "Come to my dance instead, where we shall be immune from these disgusting parasites who feed upon visiting celebrities. You shall have a date with the most adorable little pledge you ever set eyes on."

"Pretty?" said Lionel Mount, scrambling to his feet.

"Pretty—!" said Andy. "A man could give fifteen lectures about her ankles alone."

He took a red balloon from a bundle of favors and thrust it into the poet's hand.

"I trust your judgment," cried the poet, waving the balloon joyously. "What's a lecture, anyhow? Only four or five hundred dollars, more or less."

VI

In the lobby of the auditorium Phoebe Fairlie stood wringing her hands. She was surrounded by a large group of the distracted literati who kept their eyes glued nervously upon the outer door. Inside the hall a restless audience shuffled and coughed and look at watches.

"They've waited *forty-five* minutes!" wailed Phoebe in an anguished voice. "He can't keep them waiting much longer. He just *can't.*"

And at that moment a taxicab drove leisurely up to the steps. The literati rushed to greet the figure descending from the cab, and then they fell back in confusion. For it was Andy. Andy, suave and poised and smiling.

Andy, with a white rose in his buttonhole and magnificently gleaming pumps.

He strolled calmly by them without so much as a glance at their distraught faces. Humming *Brown Eyes, Why Are You Blue?* he passed into the auditorium and the next second they heard his richly courteous voice addressing the astonished crowd:

"It gives me great unhappiness to be forced to announce that Mr. Mount, our visiting celebrity, author of *The Aching Void* and other poems, is indisposed and cannot address you this evening."

Deaf to the loud buzz of disappointed people Andy leaped jauntily down from the platform and elbowed his way into the lobby again. It was the most exultant and dramatic moment of his college life as he walked over to Phoebe, preemptorily took her arm and said, "Now we'll go to the dance."

She followed meekly to the cab; and when Andy opened the door the amazed and furious literati saw their fallen lion.

He was lolling back in the seat with one arm around a proud and glowing little pledge and in the other hand he carefully clutched a red balloon.

As he seated himself beside Phoebe, Andy leaned out and shouted hilariously at Podhurst:

I can carry the moon to the end of the world
Where songs are ended and sighs begin,
But how can I carry a bottle of Scotch?
And how can I carry a quart of gin?

The pledge tittered. Phoebe gave an involuntary gasp at this sacrilege.

But the poet waved his balloon and roared in ribald appreciation.

He gave Andy a brotherly poke in the ribs. "Now tell 'em that one about the traveling man and the waitress," he gurgled.

Second Episode:
A BIGGER BETTER HALFBACK

From the Catalogue of the State University:

> *Expenses for the college year vary according to circumstances and with the character and habits of the individual.*

II: *A Bigger Better Halfback*

IT was not mere weather—something more specialized and significant: football weather. Air clean and cool like a steel blade . . . the ripe fragrance of Autumn in the cornland country . . . the flatness of sere, mellowed prairie stretching off behind the stadium to meet the burnished blue and white of the sky.

The thousands seated in the vast concrete tiers were watching the last quarter of the last game of the season. The ponderous audience dwarfed the spectacle. Incredible that such a multitude could be diverted by the pranks of twenty-two human beings and one pigskin ball! But, as anybody in the stadium could have told you, much was at stake—the monstrous honor and pride of proportionately monstrous state universities. In this seemingly trivial combat one institution of learning would emerge victorious by right of muscle; and no erudition, antiquity or scholasticism could rescue the other from shame of defeat.

In a lull of the game the captain of the cheerleaders suddenly seized his megaphone. It was his first activity in the arena, for he had busied himself directing the underlings as one who is superior to contact with the mob.

Now his horn blared imperatively: "CHEER THE TEAM!"

His face was distorted. His lithe body in white sweater and ducks twisted violently to the left and to the right while the voice of the stadium thundered at his bidding . . . he doubled toward the ground and then leaped, high and dramatic, into the air with arms flung

straight above him. As his agile feet found the turf again the prairies were echoing TEAM! TEAM! TEAM!

He thrust the tumbled hair back from his forehead and sauntered away. Women watched him go and questioned their escorts. "Oh, that's Andy Protheroe," the escorts replied impatiently. Inexcusable not to know Andy Protheroe on sight.

A profound silence fell. McCarthy stood on the enemy's forty-yard line about to start a forward pass. The ball shot amazingly, breath-takingly toward the halfback . . . a wretched fumble . . . a tangle of fierce, milling bodies . . . the opposing end was off down the field like a rabbit pursued by a snapping pack.

He ran desperately, fearfully, hugging the ball, wrenching himself miraculously from outflung arms, his face always turned blindly toward his goal. Evading the last frantic lunge of tacklers he sprawled across the line and lay there between the posts still clutching the ball as symbol of his team's victory—a seventy-two yard run for a touchdown.

On a bench in the field Andy Protheroe was seen to cover his face with his hands.

The section occupied by the visitors was alive with mad, furiously cavorting figures. Their band crashed out in delirious tempo:

There'll be a hot time
In the old town
Tonight, my baby!
Hear dem bells
Go ting-a-ling-a-ling . . .

And the rest of the spectators remained motionless in a sick quietude.

Dumbly they watched the neat drop kick that sealed their ignominy. Phlegmatic hands changed the white letters on the huge scoreboard to 7-0.

The game was ended. Pride and honor were lost.

As the stadium was drained slowly of its solemn crowd Andy Protheroe stood up and shook himself. His face was pale. He had watched the loss of more than his university's abstract renown. Loyal though he was (when it was expedient to be loyal) he was incapable of blenching at a mere legend on a scoreboard. His innumerable semesters as the lazy, brilliant dictator of college fashions had taught him that there would be other years, other games. And privately he did not consider pride and honor too blooming important.

Later in one of the soft drink parlors he found his roommate, Bill Lait, also looking melancholy for reasons of his own. Standing by the fountain they sipped their double cokes grimly.

"Well, I'm sunk, Andy," said Bill.

"Sunk!" cried Andy rolling his eyes toward the plaster ceiling. "Talk about being sunk! Why, I'm the Lusitania itself."

"How much?" said Bill curiously.

Andy shuddered. "Enough to send a freshman through a year of college in 1910. Or say the price of about eight spare tires. Call it, if you like, the expense of about two dozen campus dates . . . or three hundred cartons of cigarettes . . . or three cases of White Horse, or——"

"Don't," said Bill. "It makes me feel too morbid if-you-know-what-I-mean."

"Well, anyway," Andy persisted, "I laid six bets—even money—figure it out for yourself."

"Too dismal," said Bill, shaking his head gloomily. His voice, always hoarse, had sunk to a low, bitter croak. He ran his fingers through his stubborn thatch of hair. "Too dismal," he repeated. "If-you-know-what-I-mean, we need a new halfback."

They stared thoughtfully into the glass that mirrored their strained features. They felt that the university was somehow to blame for their injuries. If they had never registered in it they would never have lost their money.

"Lissen, I wish we had half the halfback they got at that little one-horse Plimpton College," mourned Bill.

"Plimpton College?" said Andy vaguely. He was wondering if the raccoon coat he wore could be pawned.

"Yeh. *There's* a halfback. Faster than Skid Derby ever was. But heavier than Fat Marshall. The meanest halfback in the country, ask anybody that follows the dope."

Andy's eyes had become hard and steely with interest. He rolled his cigarette back and forth between two fingers. "Bigger and better in every way?" he asked gently.

Lait nodded, his lips pursed to indicate infallible authority.

Andy smiled. With a characteristic gesture he gave his necktie a slight twist to the right. "In that case lend me some money," he said even more gently.

"Whaddye mean 'lend me some money?' " grunted his roommate, lifting pale eyebrows.

"At the last mass meeting," murmured Andy, "it was pointed out in song and story that loyalty to school and team is a lofty and admirable quality. I know you are a loyal man, Lait. I am asking in the name of our dear old Alma Mater that you lend me carfare down to Plimpton College (wherever it is)."

"What for?" said Bill densely.

"Ask me what for," said Andy, "when I return with this bigger better halfback."

II

It had been a long, tiresome ride punctuated with cinders and ending down in the razor-back hog country. As he got off the train, the people whom he thought of as "natives" stared curiously at Andy's swinging fur coat, his wide flapping trousers and his worldly face—a face with a blonde mustache trimmed narrowly above a cynical mouth, straight, aristocratic nose and the soft

darkness of romantic eyes. Women everywhere looked at him twice—three times if possible.

It was a little town, circling sullenly about the meager college buildings of severe brick and wood. Andy was surprised to find that the first person he spoke to could tell him where the halfback, Wesley Grimes, was to be found. It appeared that Wesley had honor even in his own country. And in the stationery store window was pasted a group of newspaper photographs of Grimes—an ungainly hulking figure in football garb standing awkwardly with huge fists clenched at his sides.

The dormitory where Grimes lived was nothing more than a ramshackle four-story house with a dried palm or two on the porch and large portraits of the founders in the hall to give an institutionalized effect. There was also an information desk where a youth wearing a green eyeshade rang a bell to summon Grimes from his room.

Andy waited on the hard bench for a long time, studying the drab design in the axminster carpet. He had lit a cigarette but the youth in the green eyeshade had timidly pointed to a sign on the wall:

LET US BE GENTLEMEN

This hall is dedicated to the spirit of Our Founders. Need we ask you not to smoke, spit or chew here?

Andy felt very alien and hardly in sympathy with the spirit of the founders, bewhiskered old gentlemen who glared at him angrily from their frames.

He was startled when the door opened and four men dressed in the same collegiate fashion as himself entered jauntily. He wondered dazedly if they were Plimpton College students. They, in turn, regarded his clothes with a bewildered glance as they approached the desk.

Then Andy heard each of them ask for Wesley Grimes . . . and the sudden explanation which came to him made

his neck feel hot and the warmth of his raccoon coat unbearable.

These were students from four other state universities! They, too, desired a bigger better halfback for their team.

And perhaps Grimes had already yielded to the pleas of previous visitors?

As this fear trespassed his mind Andy rose and began to pace the floor which seemed to him fantastically cluttered with gleaming fraternity pins, colored hat bands, fur coats and flapping trousers. Even as he paced the floor, perspiring in his anxiety, the door opened again and a man from still another state university entered.

Uneasily the group of enemies waited, judging each others' pins with guarded glances.

At last the clerk volunteered in an embarrassed voice: "Maybe Mr. Grimes has gone out the back way. We have compulsory chapel at four o'clock every afternoon."

The bodyguard looked at its collective watch. It was half after four. It seemed very probable that Mr. Grimes had purposely evaded his visitors by taking to the rear stairway.

Doggedly they all filed out and took up a new station at the chapel entrance. It was inevitable that the halfback should emerge into their midst eventually.

Inside, the organ was beginning a slow offertory . . . Andy surveyed his rivals with a sinking heart. The struggle would resolve itself into a matter of speed—the first man to accost Grimes on his appearance from the church would triumphantly walk away with him. Andy dared not hope that he would be that man. His position on the steps was scarcely advantageous.

Summoning all his courage he opened the chapel door and oozed himself unobtrusively in. In the red carpeted vestibule he whispered to a severe looking usher.

"I have an important message for a Mr. Grimes. Could you point him out to me?"

The usher nodded toward a massive head with rough, tow-colored hair in one of the foremost pews.

And at this moment the chapel door was pushed quietly open and the rest of the state university men entered in a solemn drove.

Andy cast one furious look at them and started down the aisle. It was the longest, most painful walk he had ever taken. The men and women on each side of him disguised none of their naive interest in his strange garb. He blushed and kept his eyes glued desperately on the back of Grimes' massive head. He felt that every movement of his arms and legs looked ridiculous. And he dared not glance about to see whether the rest of his persistent tribe was following.

Worst of all, the organ was pealing out a triumphal march while the ushers advanced toward the altar with their collection plates. His trousers flapping eccentrically around his ankles, Andy appeared to be part of this processional—the ultimate and inexplicable *piece de resistance* of the parade. He could neither get ahead of it nor drop out of it and was forced to proceed at a snail's pace in rhythmic step to the music.

As he sank down beside Grimes at last, he felt a passionate longing to crawl under the pew. Looking cautiously around, he caught the amused, sparkling eyes of a pretty girl in a green balbriggan dress. Trying to recover his lost boldness, he winked at her and she hid her face behind a prayer book in confusion.

The huge bony halfback sat stiffly in the seat, his large red hands doubled on his knees. Once in a while he peered furtively at Andy from under his overgrown eyebrows. And when the closing hymn was announced he ungraciously thrust half of a hymnal toward his neighbor.

Andy lifted his rich tenor loudly and piously in song while in the back of the church the other state university students whispered ribald comments on his behavior.

III

As the services ended Andy turned to the big halfback with an air of hearty, robust geniality. "Mr. Grimes, I believe? Protheroe's my name. I've been trying to get a chance to see you all day. In fact I came down here from the State University just to see you. Don't mind if I stroll along with you, do you? That's fine. . . . Great little college you have here, Mr. Grimes. And one that's getting a lot of publicity right now on account of your big football records. Why just the other day a fellow was saying to me——"

As Andy rattled on eloquently he was uneasily aware that the look in Grimes' small, rather piggy eyes was suspicious and inimical. He had a red face and thick, sullen lips—he moved clumsily out into the aisle and stood there like a huge animal at bay, resenting Andy's glibness but not quick witted enough to stave it off.

"Sorry," he interrupted, "I got an engagement." He indicated the pretty girl in the green balbriggan dress who stood waiting at one side. Near the vestibule door Andy nervously noted that his enemies were also waiting.

Then he met the brown eyes of the girl and he saw with surprise that they were clear, alive and beautiful. His heart (his susceptible, romantic heart) gave the hop-skip-and-jump it always did when he encountered a new and beautiful woman. He knew that she was looking at him with a fascinated admiring gaze. Intuitively he set her down at once as an ally.

"I should like to take you both to tea," he said, including her in his courteous glance.

"Thanks just the same," began the halfback brusquely, but the girl gave a little wriggle of ingenuous pleasure.

"Ah, please, Grimy," she said, thrusting her small hand into the enormous crook of his arm. And at the same time she threw Andy a sidewise little coquettish glance as if he were her cohort.

The halfback looked down once at her fluffy head, felt the pressure of her cajoling arm and grinned weakly. "A'right," he muttered in plastic assent. It seemed that he, too, was susceptible.

Triumphantly Andy left the chapel with them; but just before they reached the exit he whispered to the girl, "Don't let him speak to those birds by the door. Tell you why later."

And when the vanguard by the door now augmented by half a dozen new arrivals thrust out their hands in jovial greeting—"Winthrop's my name," "Mr. Grimes, I believe?" "Goodman's my name," "I've been waiting to see you," "Just a moment, Mr. Grimes"—Andy's new ally gave her suitor's arm a warning pinch and led him safely, firmly beyond danger.

Proudly Andy sauntered past his antagonists hoping devoutly that they would now remove themselves in disappointment from the campus,

At a small corner restaurant Andy finally convinced the waiter that three pots of tea with lemon was really what they wanted. He lit a cigarette and offered one to the girl. "Oh, I don't *dare!*" she cried, laughing. Then earnestly across the table: "Do the co-eds where you come from—do they all smoke?"

Andy assured her that it was not at all uncommon. He considered her as she sat across from him—elfin chin poised wistfully against her hand. In her eyes were wilful, darting dreams . . . above them slender eyebrows curved like birds in flight. A small flame of a girl meant to flare out vividly at life, but destined to be smothered into a sullen ember if freedom to leap into color and warmth was withheld.

Andy considered her. . . . With his unerring knowledge of such things he saw that her hair was too fluffy for the mode and for the small oval of her face. He could fancy it lying dark and glossy and very short above her ears. Something wrong, too, about her dress and slippers—he would not venture to say exactly what—but

he knew the sort of thing she ought to wear: high in the neck and long of flaring sleeve and most impudently short: Very round toed slippers with high, teetering heels. . . . Lovely! He longed to tell her——

But he turned to Wesley Grimes, who sat speechless with that defensive look on his broad red face.

"Grimes," said Andy with his most candid, friendly smile, "I want to apologize for hurling myself on you this way. But I admit I'd like to meddle a little in your affairs. I——"

"Looks like a lot of people want to," interrupted the halfback in a thick, dour voice.

The girl's face was excited. "Oh, you can't *imagine* how many people are interested in Grimy," she cried. "It's perfectly thrilling to see them all pursue him. Day after day—students coming from all over! You see they've read about his wonderful playing in all the papers and the big universities are all just *fighting* for him." Suddenly she burst into frivolous laughter. "Isn't it funny? Just think of it! All fighting over poor old Grimy!"

He looked dimly puzzled by her laughter, a little red and ill at ease, a little flattered at being discussed.

"Let 'em leave me alone," he blustered heatedly. "Let 'em stay where they b'long. I'll tend to my own business. Whadduh they mean coming butting in on my affairs all the time?" His big raw hands twitched with feeling. "This college right here is good enough for me any time. What advantage'd I get by transferring to some big college up no'th that's what I'd like to know?" He fixed Andy with his small belligerent eyes and waited unblinking for an answer.

Forcing himself to retain hope for the enterprise, Andy leaned toward the football star with a look unflinching and determined. His voice was hard as granite and firm with conviction.

"Now look here, Grimes, get this and get it straight.

I'm telling you what I *know,* see, without any guesswork about it. If my State University can get you, that's an advantage to us, sure. You're a winning card in any football team—the ace in the deck. All right. Now what do *you* get out of the shuffle?

"Well, I'll tell you: You get a damn big school to back you. A university so big that you could put this whole college into the stadium and nobody'd know that any seats had been sold out. Can't you see yourself playing in a real place like that, man?" Andy's eyes glowed with the fervor of his oratory. "The thousands and thousands watching you, leaning forward yelling for you. . . . That great big giant of a crowd wearing a field of chrysanthemums and packing a cheer that would startle an avalanche! Cheering for *you.* . . . Thundering *your* name—*Grimes, Grimes, Grimes!* All the flappers pointing you out! All the freshman wanting to say they've met you! Profs kind of tolerant and benign about your classwork. The rotogravure sections bandy your picture about as if you were a society divorcée. The All American teams swallow you whole like an oyster. You get free prom tickets. It rains fraternity bids. You're the pivot of the whole mad, swirling, whirling, dizzy roof-garden riot known as university life! Mass meetings meet to sob and choke over the mere thought of you! Prexy—the Big Boy with the administrative complex and the gold-headed cane—hands it to you for increasing his registration by a few odd thousand. All this huge, merry May dance goes on around you in an endless circle . . . you stand quietly in the middle and smile . . . because you're it—you're right in the center . . . *you're the Maypole itself!*"

He stopped abruptly on this climax, his breath coming short. He was pale with the emotional exhaustion of splashing at a great canvas with reckless colors. He knew the silence that fell was intense with the remembered magnetism of his eloquence. He knew the girl was still clinging breathlessly to his words, his gestures, person-

ality. . . . Like an artist who leans back wearily to rest, he closed his eyes for a brief moment.

And he heard Grimes saying with a new, reluctant note of respect in his halting voice: "We-ell—it does sound pretty swell, all right. I guess you sure know something about it." He broke off in a short self-conscious laugh. "Sounds pretty far-fetched. But maybe there's something in what you say."

Andy let him sit there solemnly musing on the picture of brilliant fame. Andy was content to remain silent a while. For under the table he had pursued and captured the girl's warm, vibrant fingers.

IV

Now Andy, being experienced in both diplomacy and the golden clink of words, should have known all about leaving well-enough to itself. But perhaps he was a little intoxicated with the magical throb and cadence of his own phrases. Or perhaps the touch of the girl's hand had made him incautiously desirous of seeing her eyes grow dark and wide again.

He began now to add little touches, to fill in the foreground, to deepen the chroma of his first well-chosen colors:

"And don't forget the social life. . . . Sophisticated glamor and all that old rot. The dancing, the confetti, the rented palms and dinner clothes . . . the firelight gleam-softly on the chaperons' hoary wise-cracks . . . Brother Fatleigh getting tight and offering the name of his bootlegger to the Dean of Women . . . the raucous song—the little import who insists on doing a toedance—the spirited punch—the jazz that launched a thousand hips!"

The girl drew a quick breath of exhilaration.

But the halfback got to his feet, pushing away the chair with a loud scrape. With his heavy chin thrust

forward and both hands flattened out on the table, he shouted:

"All right! All right! So that's the kind of a low, rotten place you come from, is it? I might of known it just to look at you." His face was dark with Cromwellian rage—his small eyes were fanatical.

"Go back to your debaucheries! Go back to your sink of iniquity! Don't come around here trying to lure decent, God-fearing people out of the path of dooty." He turned roughly to the girl. "Come on, Lucy. Let's get out of here."

The proprietor and the few others in the restaurant were staring. The girl crimsoned and rose helplessly, casting a shamed, appealing look at Andy.

Andy's quick temper rose in his throat and choked him. He was disgusted at the scene and uncontrollably angry. He would recklessly have leaped into a fight with Grimes in spite of the sureness of his own annihilation.

"Good Lord!" he said scathingly. "I didn't come down here as a missionary to the heathen."

"Don't talk about missionaries, either!" sputtered the football man; the word appeared to enrage him. "I'm studying to be one myself when I git out of school—and I don't want any back talk from you about it, understand."

"Gosh," murmured Andy. "Gosh." He had a curious vision of Grimes in his savage bigotry sending a Chinaman flying toward Paradise with a well-aimed drop kick—according to Andy's hazy convictions it would be an odd method of spreading peace on earth, good will to men. Suddenly he felt only pitying amusement for this great, primitive hulk—surely a direct descendent of some Cotton Mather who preached of a revengeful deity showering fire and brimstone.

He silently turned away, paid the bill and walked out of the restaurant. It had been an exciting adventure . . . nothing more . . . a fruitless errand with a queer

climax and a faint tinge of romance that he would always remember.

As he got on the evening train and settled down in the dusty red plush seat he realized with a shock of disappointment that he would never see the girl again. He didn't even know her name. Grimes had boorishly neglected to introduce them.

Philosophically he tried to put her out of his mind—but he kept seeing her face in the darkening car window; and at last when the swinging lamps were lighted they sent wavering gleams of fantastic color dancing in the glass pane as if it had been a strange pool mirroring fitfully her lost eyes, the vanished ghost of her smile.

A slim flame of a girl meant to flare out vividly at life but destined to be smothered into a sullen ember. . . . The pity of it, he thought. Half-remembered words read somewhere long ago came to him:

Everybody loves a wild girl chasing a dream!

The dreams would be denied to her. She would be crushed and dulled. . . . And at last she would perhaps marry the hero of her provincial story—Wesley Grimes, missionary to helpless savages . . . her pretty mouth would become a straight line of bitterness, the wistfulness would leave her face and her flying brows would be no more like birds soaring splendidly above the brilliance of her eyes.

His thoughts began to blur, his mournful predictions became incoherent, and with his head wearily in the crook of his arm he slept.

In the morning Bill Lait met him at the station with eager questions. Andy was evasive. For the sake of his pride he did not confess the futility of his journey. "You wait," he said mysteriously. "You wait and see. I can't tell you just how it's coming out—but I sure handed that bird a mean line of talk."

Lait nodded admiringly. He knew the gusto of Andy's

adjectives and had no doubt that they had overwhelmed the halfback. "Put the old stuff on the apple, did you?" he asked jubilantly.

"Ah, did I!" said Andy. "That bozo was so thrilled he was actually speechless. So dazed he didn't remember to say goodbye to me."

Bill gave one of his hoarse, grotesque chortles, "And when will our big butter-and-egg-man arrive?"

Andy meditated. "He won't come before the end of the semester anyhow," he said with veracity. Then he added a sagacious warning: "Remember Bill, not a word about all this to anybody. We don't want Coach Miles or the Athletic Association getting wise to us."

"The silence of the tomb," pledged Bill, holding up a solemn forefinger.

VI

Other women, other political activities engrossed Andy so that he was able to forget the girl and the star halfback. Then as he was walking across the snow-piled campus at the beginning of the new semester he saw her coming toward him.

At first he felt that he must have conjured her out of his vague memories . . . but no, she was speaking to him, smiling up into his face. Her eyes were clear, alive and beautiful as they had been that first moment when he saw her. And again his heart did its romantic hop-skip-and-jump, for no wisdom could teach Andy Protheroe calmness or caution before the charm of a woman. Especially a new, unconquered woman. . . .

"Don't tell me that you're registering here!" he exclaimed. "And if so how come and why?"

Her piquant face looked out at him from the soft furry collar of her new and triumphantly smart coat. She teetered beside him on the high heels of delightfully round-toed slippers. She was exactly as she should have been—exactly as he had known she could be. With

quick perception she had discovered at once what outward trappings were needed to symbolize her beauty.

"You're not quite believable," said Andy, still holding her small gloved hand in both his own.

Her lips parted in a frankly elated smile. "Don't you think," she asked, "that I'm much nicer than I was?"

"Infinitely," said Andy. "It remains only to introduce you to Phoebe Fairlie (Pi Omega) and she will see to the matter of pledge ribbons and all that old rot."

"My name is Lucy Transome," she remarked thoughtfully.

"Lucy!" repeated Andy. He grew lyrical: "Isn't there a poem something about

Lucy, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicean barks of yore
That gently o'er a well-waxed floor

or something like that?"

She laughed obliquely across the high cavalier collar. "Your English courses are pretty well mixed up in your mind . . . but I see what you mean."

"Do you?" said Andy gently. He looked at her with soft, dark eyes. "I wonder . . . if you do."

As they walked across the campus her face lifted to his was grave again. "But do you know why I came here? No, of course you don't know—you couldn't guess. Maybe you don't even remember how you described the State University that day. Anyhow you made me see it all. . . . The glamour of it, the freedom, the music and dancing and crowds." Her lips quivered a little in their desire to be articulate. "You can't understand how—how wonderful it sounded to me. I was—well, it sounds funny but I don't know how else to say it—*starved*. For different people . . . and laughter . . . and lights. Right while you were talking I knew all at once that I had to come here—that I *would* come here!"

Then he guessed, looking at her vivid, determined face, that some day she would go far beyond him, stepping very proudly and surely along some new adventuresome path where he dared not follow. But for a while she would be at his side—eager to learn his wisdom, responsive to his pagan precepts. And the happiness of the moment was always complete happiness to Andy's facile heart.

When he parted from her Andy dropped a cautious question about Grimes. "What's become of your football suitor? Was he heart-broken when you left Plimpton College?"

Her eyes danced with demure admission of her own power. "He first went to Plimpton because I did. And now he's followed me up here, of course. He's all registered. He says the State University isn't nearly as immoral as you painted it. I think he's a little disappointed because he hasn't stumbled over a drunken brawl or a bevy of chorus girls!"

"*But is he going to play football?*" cried Andy.

"Oh, is he!" she laughed. "He can hardly wait for spring practise to begin and the great big giant of a crowd cheering for him, thundering his name in the mad, swirling, dizzy roof-garden riot known as university life!" She waved mockingly and was gone.

Andy burst noisily into the room he shared with Bill Lait and found that ugly, good-natured, indolent person yawning over a game of solitaire in which he was craftily cheating himself.

"We've got him, boy, we've got him!" exulted Andy. "That superlative halfback known as Wesley Grimes registered here to-day and will be out for spring practise."

Bill gave an ecstatic whistle and they wrung each other's hands in self-congratulation. "We gotta winning team now, if-you-know-what-I-mean," said Bill devoutly.

"Isn't it wonderful," murmured Andy, "how a team can be built up by rhetoric?"

VI

In the same rage of Berserker righteousness with which he would some day approach the heathen, Wesley Grimes faced the line of scrubs. Awkward, ludicrous in his brown padded suit, he stood with his great head thrust forward on his thick neck, and his small eyes gleamed with fanatical light. His raw, red hands closed and unclosed on his bunchy, powerful knees. He breathed heavily with loud audible gulps. The scrubs eyed the new halfback uneasily.

The signal was for a forward pass. McCarthy sent the ball speeding dizzily. With a breath-taking quickness, Grimes was through the air and upon it like an angry lion leaping for prey. His face was black and dour as he hurled off one man after the other. He held the ball like a vise. He was relentless, oblivious as a tornado.

His huge feet ploughed the field with mad, incredible swiftness. Beneath his outstretched iron arm, tacklers fell as ineffectually as paper soldiers. He was tremendous, like the cruel, unseeing force of wind or flood or roaring fire. He needed no interference to protect him. He needed only his own dull, furious strength and the pigskin ball. He fell half-crouching between the goal posts. . . . When he got up he did not even brush his knees or straighten his helmet. He stood with an embarrassed grin on his red face waiting eagerly for practise to continue. Among the handful of spectators Andy and Lucy Tramsome watched him with proprietary pride.

It was Bill who at last pointed out the only flaw in the situation. "D'jever stop to think," he said to Andy one day, "that I and you may never benefit from this Grimes fella?"

Andy stared at him. "Why, man, if we lay bets three to two we can't lose. We'll clean up——"

"But he won't be eligible till year after next," continued Bill in his immutable pessimism. "And by that time you

and I may be out in the wide, wide world. What do we get out of it? Why did you go to all that trouble and fuss of dragging him up here, anyway?"

Andy was taking Lucy to the midsemester hop that night. He continued to arrange his dress tie with meticulous care. "I did it," he said softly, "for the sake of the Dear Old School."

And it was characteristic of Andy that he almost believed it himself.

Third Episode:
THE REFORM OF THE DEANS

From the collected works of Mae Underhill Lampeer:

What has become of the sweet old-fashioned girl?

III: *The Reform of the Deans*

IT occurred to Phoebe Fairlie one evening during her sophomore year that the State University was not all that it should be. At the moment she was rather absent-mindedly kissing Andy Protheroe in the shadows of the Pi Omega porch; and she drew away with the first fervor she had shown that listless spring evening.

"It's time," she said, "that we were reforming the deans."

He deliberately ignored her remark. In her highbrow moods Phoebe always seemed a stranger to him, as if her loveliness were only a reflection shimmering in the clear, cold pool of her thoughts. Andy lifted her chin preemptorily.

"Not now." Her eyes in the dimness looked up at him thoughtfully. "I had never considered before," she said, "what a dangerous influence they were——"

"*Who* were?"

"Why, the deans."

He laughed politely. "*Honi soit—*" he began to quote.

"Oh, shut up! I'm serious, Andy, really I am. I don't ask much in the way of reputation, but in two more years the deans will rob me of what little I do have. My parents!" she mourned. "And that nice sentimental little boy I used to go to parties with in high school, who said I was 'spiritual.' (He was a darling.) Why," she continued vehemently, "by the time I'm a senior, people at home will think perfectly awful things about me!"

"What do you care?" Andy, too, was concerned . . . carried away for the moment by the seriousness of her

argument. "If you remain, as I trust, one of our wise virgins——"

"*See!*" Phoebe cried. "That's just it—that constant obsession with virginity—that's the trouble with the deans. . . . The movies they see, the books they read——"

"But," said Andy, "you can't bar Ethel M. Dell and Gertrude Atherton from the libraries."

"No—we must improve the deans' taste in reading. You know, with the right sort of a campaign—a campaign, that's what it will take. And publicity. Committees. Everything."

"As our slogan," said Andy zealously, "I propose this —'Not every co-ed is a nymphomaniac—don't let the deans tell you different.'"

Phoebe smiled with vague indulgence and lightly patted his arm. "But you're not serious, Andy, and I am. Terribly. It means so much to me. When I think how my mother worries because of this nonsense about college morals the deans are always talking . . . and you know that——"

"Two per cent," said Andy judicially. "Unofficial statistics. Ted Allison says four and Bill Lait says nine, but they've been reading the Sunday papers. No, two per cent of indiscretion among college women as opposed to 34.7 per cent in the great outside world. . . . And maybe even the two per cent could be saved," Andy added factitiously, "if your campaign can remove the evil influence of the deans and campus ministers."

Phoebe disdained his levity. "They're pathetically well-intentioned creatures. It's only that they keep sex constantly before the University and the public." She gripped his wrist tensely. "I'm sick of it! I came here supposedly for an education, not to be reminded that reproduction is the sole end and aim of a woman's life. I won't have it!"

"There! There!" he said soothingly. He put his arm about her. "Don't take it so damned hard."

It was beginning to dawn upon him that she was actually serious. Phoebe worried him at times like this . . . a Jekyll-Hyde sort of a girl . . . a girl who could flame deep as a ruby at one moment, and in the very next instant become keen and clear and edged as a diamond. It was incredible to him as he peered down at her soft, rounded chin that any girl so pretty would associate with ideas. And deep down in his sheik's heart he was mildly shocked by her disarming frankness, the unabashed light her mind threw on forbidden subjects. It always made him feel a bit uneasy. In that respect he was one with the deans; they wouldn't have liked it, either. Anyhow, the deans weren't such a bad lot, Andy thought. They did the best they could, poor old souls. Dean Abrams, for instance. On one of Andy's numerous visits to the executive office in the Administration Building, Dean Abrams had been in a genial mood and told him a rather robust anecdote which Andy in turn had passed on to the A. O. G.'s. Women couldn't understand that good, vulgar comaraderie of the male. Women didn't know—not even a highbrow like Phoebe Fairlie.

"See here," said Andy in a tolerant, protective tone, and for the first time he was as earnest as Phoebe. "Lay off the deans, darling. They're all right. They'll give you a song and dance once in a while, but they're harmless enough if you humor them a little. . . . Remember their advancing years! Remember that they, too, once had a white-haired old mother who kept a light burning in the kitchen window for their return! Remember that——"

"Stop! Stop!" she cried, laughing and putting up both hands to defend herself from his glib rhetoric.

Andy felt triumphantly that he had rescued her from the perils of thinking. Once more she was warm and secure in his arms, protected from ideas; and the shadows of the night lay soft on her face like a caress. "Kiss Andy," he commanded in a whisper.

There was a long instant of silence, then he looked

down at her and knew that he had lost Phoebe Fairlie forever. "Not tonight," she said gently. "Not tonight, I don't want to." Her smile was whimsical. "We've got to be setting a better example for the deans, you know."

II

Early the next morning Phoebe Fairlie walked into the office of *The Lame Duck* in the basement of University Hall. Ted Allison, the editor, sat alone at the battered desk stealing the best wisecracks from the files of 1911 and laying subtle plans for the division of last month's advertising income.

It was not the first time that some campus reformer had invaded this office, but the rest of them had been a pale procession of frumps . . . eager committees of girls from Halcyon House wondering if Mr. Allison wouldn't be interested in writing an editorial for their missionary training fund drive . . . nobody like Phoebe Fairlie, nobody. This morning she was Joan of Arc with her high martial collar, straight red mouth, straight yellow hair, imperious slimness. She was a girl who needed only a cause, and her cause was flashing in her eyes. Swiftly she told Ted without once noticing the high tribute of admiration in his gaze. She told him all she had told Andy last evening, and more. She produced a hastily scrawled outline from among the untidy wad of handkerchiefs, compacts and cigarettes in her purse.

"Listen to this, Ted," she said; then frowning upon his complacent and patronizing masculinity, she cried fiercely, "Don't smile that way! This isn't a joke. It'll work, this plan—it really will if only we all get together. Last night I scribbled down the outline—it isn't complete yet, of course, and a great many changes may have to be made—but it just shows you—now pay attention!"

She read it hurriedly, glancing up with dramatic emphasis at each pause:

"A. COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

"1. Personal visits to deans, pastors, etc., in effort to gain for co-ed moral equality with other women.
  "a. Combat absurdly prolonged adolescence dictated by petty rules of conduct governing university women.
  "b. Allow university woman some escape from sex-consciousness forced upon her by deans, pastors, mothers, etc.
"2. Campaign among libraries, deans, churches, English Departments, women's clubs, etc., to develop more intelligence and less pruriency in reading, theater, etc.
  "a. Reading courses suggested—Havelock Ellis, Carpenter, Shaw, etc.

"B. COMMITTEE ON PUBLICITY

"1. Editorials in student publications combating:
  "a. Professional 'uplift.'
  "b. Public appetite for university scandal.
  "c. Old ladies of both sexes who believe in the flapper myth and are worried about the future of the race.
  "d. The whither-are-we-drifting type of moron—"

"Wait a minute!" Ted interrupted. "Like all reformers, you're wrong. The deans aren't to blame—they're victims like the rest of us."

"Then whose fault *is* it?" she demanded, staring impatiently at the unread portion of her outline.

Ted waved one ink-stained hand in a meandering gesture. "How can I know who started this younger generation stuff and who is perpetuating the legend? Ah," he said sadly, "that was a dirty trick."

"I thought," said Phoebe, "all that nonsense had run its course."

"You laymen might think so, but as an editor who diligently reads his exchanges I can attest that the second and more deadly stage has only begun. Every week I am besieged by special article writers who are here to get the dirt about the younger generation. At first I used to deny everything, but it did no good. Once a lady reporter asked me if it were true that the students here had Socialistic tendencies. 'Madam,' I said politely, 'the glassy young Babbitts around this campus would cut anybody's throat who dared to wear a necktie different from that worn by everybody else—that's how radical they are.' . . . And when her article came out it was captioned: 'Red Menace Reaches Campus of State University, Hints Student Editor.' . . . What can you do?" Ted appealed. "Now I tell 'em all, 'Sure, the younger generation is lustful, bad-mannered, indecently exposed, intoxicated, or what-have-you?' It pleases them—they look at you with such disappointment if they don't have a chance to write about legs and petting. Phoebe, dearest," he concluded amiably, "it is only our duty to be as kindly and tolerant as possible toward our elders while we wait for them to die off."

"By that time," Phoebe mourned, "we'll be middle-aged ourselves and we'll be getting alarmed at the antics of the next generation."

"Probably," Ted mused. "It's always profitable. Pornography is at its best when mixed with morals and religion. . . . But you're wrong about the deans, Phoebe. It's to their advantage to soft pedal this younger generation stuff, and the deans do love their jobs. Listen! If you really want to reform somebody, I'll give you a chance—tomorrow this office is to be honored by a visit from Mae Underhill Lampeer. Why don't you talk to her and relieve me of the boredom? It'll give you a little practice; then after you've set her right the deans will be easy, because they all read her stuff."

"Mae Underhill Lampeer?" said Phoebe vaguely. "I never heard—"

"Sure you never heard of her. She's a writer of sentimental novels which women of forty-five adore. She started along home-and-mother lines, but lately she's switched to younger generation and doubled her sales—writes about roadhouses where wine and beer are served as a mixed drink and flappers dance on the table. She still believes that lobster, taxicabs and *hors d'oeuvres* bring about the downfall of young girls. Her characters are shrewd, kindly, tolerant old souls who quietly die of mortification because their granddaughter's knees showed at the Masonic ball. . . . She's coming here to write a series of articles for some women's magazine—will you see her?"

After some thought Phoebe said that she would. "At least," she said, "I can learn something about that type of mind. . . . But I haven't given up this program by any means," she cried, holding up the interrupted outline. "I'm serious about it, and I want to discuss it with you—"

"Some other time," said Ted indulgently. "Got to steal some jokes now. . . . Don't forget—Mrs. Lampeer will be here at ten tomorrow morning."

III

That night in the darkness of her room Phoebe lost several hours' sleep while her busy imagination rehearsed the scene next day with a vaguely pictured lady novelist. . . .

Mrs. Lampeer: But surely, Miss Fairlie, you cannot approve of petting parties?

Phoebe Fairlie: Not altogether. But they are a vast improvement over the licensed prostitution with which women of the last generation shielded themselves from realities.

MRS. LAMPEER (*obviously shocked at the casual word*): My dear! Of course I think that—vice of that sort is dreadful but—but that brings up another point of which I was going to speak. This disconcerting frankness of the younger people—what is your opinion of that?

PHOEBE FAIRLIE: I don't think that the so-called younger generation is half frank enough yet. But it has made some effort to pull itself out of the mud of hypocrisy which mired down the last generation.

MRS. LAMPEER: Oh yes! (*Hastily consulting her notes again.*) Now as to the lack of religion which we older people hear so much about?

PHOEBE FAIRLIE: Women do not need religion when they have men. I daresay that women of this age will never have as much need for freakish faiths as the more frustrated women of the mid-Victorian period.

MRS. LAMPEER (*absently*): I suppose so. . . . Oh, I was going to ask—do you find much drinking among the young people, Miss Fairlie?

PHOEBE FAIRLIE (*flippantly*): It's hard to get, good stuff. (*More seriously.*) No, Mrs. Lampeer, not a great deal—not as much as the professional younger-generation-howlers would have you believe.

MRS. LAMPEER: H'm, very interesting. Now just one more question, Miss Fairlie, and then I must go. . . .

Invariably Phoebe emerged from her imaginary battle of the generations with poise and assurance while Mrs. Lampeer, a mild faded little body dressed all in black, left the scene unconvinced but puzzled and shaken. . . . Yet Phoebe knew from the skimpy wisdom of her twenty years that the interview could not be so easy. Even though she had tried to be fair to Mrs. Lampeer's cause, she realized that she must have overlooked some strong arguments which would be used against her tomorrow.

Next morning she was tense and determined as she armed herself for the encounter with one of her most attractive dresses, her sheerest flesh-colored stockings and

newest slippers. She had never dressed more carefully for a date. Just as she was about to leave the house Andy Protheroe telephoned.

"God be with you," he said in mock solicitude.

"No doubt," said Phoebe, "Mrs. Lampeer is quite chummy with Him."

"Anyhow, let me offer consolation tonight, won't you? Eight o'clock, say?"

"Eight o'clock."

On the way to the office in U Hall she was not as confident as she had been last night. Already she had forgotten in her nervousness many of the things she had planned to say. Her lips were pale under their penciling of orange-red and they moved stiffly in accompaniment to her panicky thoughts. . . . Mrs. Lampeer would first ask . . . then in reply . . .

IV

A cruiser of a woman with red, cheerful face, with a wide and capable mouth. A woman with a terrific bosom which jutted out horizontally and ended in an awful precipice which Phoebe could not help staring at. A huge, brisk woman wearing a violet turban. . . . Mae Underhill Lampeer!

She rushed across the office and shook hands energetically. Her words came like chips swiftly borne along on the booming contralto torrent of her voice.

"You're *just* the person I want to see! *Do* sit down, my dear." She patted Phoebe's shoulder with a plump hand. "Now I *don't* want to take too much of your time—I have *no* use for people who don't realize the value of *time,* do you? And I *hope* you won't think I'm going to ask you too many questions, but just as I *told* the editors when I was given this assignment, 'Mr. Dilling,' I said, 'the *only* way to get this information is to go right to the young people of the colleges.' And here

I am!" She smiled down affectionately. *"Now,* Miss—Miss *Fair*mont, is it?—I *do* dislike people who pronounce your name wrong, don't *you?*—now, Miss Fairmont, I'll get my notebook and *please* prepare yourself for just *hundreds* of questions."

Phoebe timidly tried to cover her knees with her inadequate skirt. She felt very small and young and helpless, smothered by the fearful vitality of this woman of fifty with the baby face. But Phoebe was determined that her answers would be courageous, even though she could imagine the hurt, surprised look which would cross the ample woman's features.

"Now!" boomed Mrs. Lampeer. "Let us begin. Of course, as we *all* know, the flapper is a girl who rolls her stockings, rouges to excess, paints her lips and carries a flask of synthetic gin in her purse. Do you not find it so?" Without pausing, she dashed down several notes in shorthand and continued, "The flapper is a young woman who says *vile* and *putrid* every other word and is always talking about *repressions,* haven't you found? (Freud, you know.) And no doubt you, too, have observed the disrespect to older people which is *so* characteristic of the post-war generation? The fast driving, the bad manners, of course you agree with me on all these points, do you not, Miss Fairmont? Ah, I was *sure* you would."

Mrs. Lampeer beamed as she made more notes. There was at last an interval amounting to a fraction of a second and Phoebe tried desperately to get in a word . . . but the Voice drove on relentlessly.

"Oh *yes!* The beauty parlors. Only this morning I counted eighteen of them near the campus. *Eighteen,* would you believe it, Miss Fairmont? Some statistics of my own, don't you see? Ha, ha!" Mrs. Lampeer laughed in her robust manner. "Shows, doesn't it," she said archly, "that the modern young woman pays more attention to her *face* than her *mind?* And I suppose you have even more roadhouses than beauty parlors?

Roadhouses that serve gin and where the shimmy is danced? *Ter*-rible, isn't it?" sighed Mrs. Lampeer complacently as her pencil scampered across the page. "And this new dance—the Charleston, do you call it?—it is even more *sensual* than the shimmy, is it not? The jazz, too, we must not forget that. And, oh *yes*—"

There was another brief pause while Mrs. Lampeer turned a page. Once more Phoebe managed to open her lips and once more she was left gasping.

"Yes," said Mrs. Lampeer with gusto, "the petting. We mustn't forget that, now must we? Or is it *necking* that you young people call it in the modern slang? Yes, *necking,* let us say. Now as to the *necking*—don't you think it accounts for the fact that the modern young woman is so much more *sensual* than her mother or grandmother? It would, of course. The *necking* combined with the continual drinking, what may we *expect?* . . . Now you are *so* kind to answer all my questions, Miss Fairmont, and I mustn't presume *too* much on your time and patience, but there are just a few more things that I wanted to clear up—"

She stopped abruptly to put on her coat. At last there was a moment . . . but Phoebe was limp and beaten and stunned.

"I see Dean Abrams next," explained Mrs. Lampeer as she drew on her gloves. "Oh *yes,* just a few more points. . . . To what *causes* do you attribute the weakening of the moral fibre in the youth of today? No doubt you agree with me that the causes are

(a) the aftermath of the war
(b) the decline of home influence
(c) the lack of wholesome entertainment for our boys and girls.

Do you not? Yes, you do, I can see. . . . Now thank you *so* much, Miss Fairmont, as I *told* Mr. Dilling when he gave me this assignment, 'Mr. Dilling,' I said, 'the only way to get this information is to go directly to the young people themselves and let them tell *their* side of

the story.' And I can't tell you *how* much I appreciate the help you have given me this morning. I *know* you won't mind if I use some of the information you've given me, will you, Miss Fairmont? *So kind!* I wish I had longer to talk to you—" she pounced upon Phoebe and wrung her hand "—but I *must* go." Like a violet tornado she hurled herself toward the door, her words never halting "—*so* grateful—can never *tell* you how grateful —goodbye, Miss Fairmont—"

V

For a long time Phoebe sat motionless in the deserted room. All her thoughts had been extinguished like a candle. But feebly, gradually a picture came to her dazed consciousness . . . a picture of herself lying flat in a dusty road while Mrs. Lampeer triumphantly rode over her on a bicycle. Mrs. Lampeer with a Gibson-girl pompadour, bustles, corsets, starched underskirts, wasp waist, puffed sleeves . . . Mae Underhill Lampeer riding a bicycle and singing in a loud, hoarse, sentimental voice,

Hello, Central, give me Heaven . . .

VI

The shadows of the Pi Omega porch. Fraternity Row. Andy Protheroe and Phoebe Fairlie.

"Promise me," Andy mocked, "that you won't try to reform the rest of us now that you've got the deans and Mrs. Lampeer to lead a better life."

"I promise," said Phoebe wearily, "not to reform anybody again."

All evening she had been withheld and silent. She wouldn't dance, she wouldn't go to the Orph . . . she held tightly to his hand and stared at the lights with

averted face. Inexplicable sort of girl, Phoebe, more so than other girls. Andy knew certainly now that he had lost her and his fancy wandered back to the Theta he had danced with last night.

"At least," he said absently, "don't begin any more reforms while I still have half a case of Black and White left."

Her face brightened for the first time that evening. "You have, Andy? *You have?* Why didn't you tell me?"

Andy Protheroe was chivalrous, but he was concerned about his Scotch. He had considered other occasions, other girls. . . .

"I thought you didn't drink," he excused himself.

"I don't," she confessed. "That is, I didn't. But tonight—tonight is different. Tonight I need a stimulant." She faced him with a look which always afterward puzzled him as he remembered it. "Andy," she said, "you won't forget to kiss me at least once? . . . I don't ask it for myself," she explained wryly. "I ask it only in respect for our elders—Mrs. Lampeer and the deans and the older generation would be so disappointed if we didn't pet just a little."

Fourth Episode:
MID-VICTORIAN

From an address before the Rotary Club by President McLaren, of the State University:

> *The only legitimate purpose of literature is to raise the moral standards of the reader.*

IV: *Mid-Victorian*

IT was three o'clock in the morning and even Fraternity Row was asleep. Only one dim light could be seen in all the shadowy length of the avenue—a third-floor room in the A. O. G. house—young Podhurst's room. But if the brothers were all snoring at this unearthly hour, the Muse was still awake. The Muse was whispering to young Podhurst.

Maybe she was the same Muse who long ago whispered to Boccaccio, to Rabelais, to Margaret of Navarre; but styles change for muses as well as for flappers. And tonight she was a very eager Muse, young and indignant, wearing bobbed hair and knee-high skirts. "Poddy," she whispered, her face close to his, "be free! Be unafraid! Express yourself, Poddy! Remember that all these eggs around this campus are mid-Victorians, Poddy, and live your own life. . . ."

Podhurst laid aside the book review he was writing for the student literary monthly, *The Torch*. He laid it aside regretfully, for it was an extremely sad review, and Poddy liked to write sad things—as he wrote them a gentle, delicious melancholy tickled his soul until paradoxically he achieved actual geniality and concluded his five hundred words with a few of those sophisticated, intimate twitterings which book reviewers enjoy. In two years he had deemed only one author worthy of his praise . . . an ambitious young chap named George Moore whom Poddy had discovered. Such authors as Knut Hamsun and Anatole France came in for his firm condemnation; and he dismissed all American writers

(except Lionel Mount, of course) with a few stinging lines.

But tonight he had listened to the Muse and he put aside his book review regretfully to begin a long-anticipated piece of creative work.

In the bed which occupied a far corner of the room Poddy's roommate, Brother Fatleigh, moaned in his sleep. His chubby, glossy face was innocent of any literary consciousness; he only snored while young Podhurst began to create a cross section of life as it is.

II

At eight o'clock the story was done. The ashtray was filled with heaps of twisted cigarette ends, the table littered with frenzied pages of notebook paper. Podhurst sank back wearily, his eyes dark and his face drawn.

Brother Fatleigh woke up audibly. Somewhat stupid from a night in the smoke-heavy room, he rubbed his eyes and said crossly,

"Whass'matter?"

Podhurst inspected his roommate with analytical deliberation. Here was a man who had never known Truth and Beauty, a man who only saw the gross, material things of life, a man whose mind was not capable of grasping a single abstract thought. It seemed incredible to Podhurst that such people could exist.

"Nothing," said Podhurst with dignity. "I've been writing."

"Watcha looking at me that way for, then?"

Podhurst smiled gently and began to assemble the scribbled pages, while Fatleigh went off grumbling to the shower.

After breakfast Poddy gathered the literary brothers of A. O. G. into a corner of the living room—only those who really understood—and began to read his story aloud. At the end of the sixth page Andy Protheroe and Bill

Lait dropped in. Looking at the expressions of the literary brothers, Bill and Andy guessed that some ripe anecdote was being unfolded; they joined the group, although they really did not understand at all.

Four more pages and Bill Lait's ugly face took on a sheepish expression. Andy, too, looked slightly embarrassed. Both of them were shocked. Despite their occasional dip into one of the censored books which the brothers bought at outrageous prices for the entertainment of co-eds, despite their appreciation of a good man-to-man narrative, Bill and Andy had stern moral convictions—there were some things which simply shouldn't be written about, even though they might be done.

Podhurst felt their inimical silence and stopped his reading to inquire, "What do you think of it?"

"Worse than anything I ever heard in a smoking car," said Bill.

"If you ask me," said Andy, grimacing, "it's tripe."

"Awful," groaned Bill.

"Garbage," Andy elaborated.

Podhurst and the literary brothers smiled at each other tolerantly. Still numbed, Andy and Bill went upstairs to have a drink and discuss the depravity of the literati.

"Mid-Victorians," commented Podhurst when they were out of hearing.

Everybody agreed that they were and that the story would not offend the merest child who really appreciated Truth. "But what," they asked, "are you going to do with it, Poddy? You'd never dare to hand it in at class."

"I shall hand it in at class," Podhurst insisted. "It's not my fault that the University has all these inhibitions —I'll hand it in even if I'm suspended for it."

III

Dr. Christine Griffith did not like to correct papers. Because she did not like it she made something of a cere-

mony out of the task, having long ago learned that ceremonies are useful for the clothing of realities. She sadly put away the copy of *Tristram Shandy* she was rereading, put another piece of wood on the fire and powdered her nose. She powdered her nose and rouged her cheeks, for all day in the classroom she went shiny. Then she slipped on a negligee of brave pattern and color which would have astounded the youths of Rhetoric 16 who saw her as a slow, diligent, humorous doctor of much dry learning and had never guessed that she was a woman, too.

Each fortnight the students of Rhetoric 16 handed in a narrative, and it was these narratives which Miss Griffith particularly disliked. So many times in the last ten years she had watched the machinations of the long arm of coincidence!

When she came to young Podhurst's thick typed manuscript Miss Griffith read the first paragraph with some reasonable disbelief. The incredibility of the thing smote her full in the face and she passed her broad, capable hand over her forehead wonderingly. . . . A long time ago she had accepted the innate conservatism of university youth with resignation; but sometimes she hopefully pictured a narrative coming from her classroom which held some of the gusto these young people usually concealed behind trite phrases and situations. Maybe this was it?

Two more paragraphs and she realized that it was not. A slow red crept over Miss Griffith's features as she read on. And at the end of the story she weakly made herself a cup of tea. . . . There was nothing she could do about it. Nothing! How indeed could she add five years to young Podhurst's age? . . . Miss Griffith marked the paper "E," scribbled a few cryptic comments on the margin and hurried on to the next.

IV

In a booth of one of the soft drink parlors an indignant conference was held over this "E." For several days the literati had been waiting to see what would happen.

"Anyhow, Poddy," said a disappointed sophomore, "they didn't kick you out for it."

"No," said Podhurst darkly, "but you can depend upon it, though, the University has its own ways of doing things like that. Didn't I tell you that freedom of expression was practically impossible around here?"

"It's—it's hell!" sputtered the sophomore.

"Well! What could you expect of a mid-Victorian like her?"

For the next several days the story reposed innocuously on Podhurst's desk, but its fame spread among the literati. It was agreed that something must be done about it. Each afternoon meetings were held at the You'll Come Inn while Podhurst and his cohorts glared into their cokes and muttered imprecations upon the Department of English.

Finally somebody proposed that the story be read to old Gabler, who taught the Russian Literature class and also gave a course in picaresque novels. "If there is an emancipated prof on the campus it's old Gabler."

Podhurst was reticent and skeptical at first. Then he saw visions of old Gabler vindicating his story—old Gabler (funny old fish) rising in his nervous, preoccupied manner and stammering, "Yes, oh yes! Really, quite well done. Er—have you ever thought of having your things published, Mr. Podhurst?"

The next Saturday afternoon half a dozen young crusaders for art gathered at the You'll Come Inn. There were two girls who wrote verse, young Podhurst and three men who belonged to the group. Phoebe Fairlie had been asked but pleaded an engagement.

"Since she began playing around with Protheroe and the rest of the Elks, Phoebe is no longer loyal to us," said one of the men bitterly.

Grimly and significantly the assembled literati proceeded toward old Gabler's bachelor quarters.

"This," said Podhurst, "is the test."

V

For weeks old Gabler had been doing research toward the writing of a book of criticism. It had been gently conveyed to him by the University that if he wished a raise in pay he must produce something which would resound through scholastic circles of the land to the glory of the State University. Now he was weary with long nights of poring over books and the doctor had told him that his blood pressure was not at all what it should be. Of course this explained the weakness and dizziness which sometimes threatened to overwhelm him in the classroom.

He was startled when the bell rang. It was a long time since anybody had visited him in his rooms—without realizing it, old Gabler had become gradually isolated from this University of jazz and stadiums and publicity, for he was a gentle old soul who loved his pipe and his book.

His brown beetle eyes blinked in amazement as he opened the door and saw the solemn delegation outside.

Podhurst was the spokesman. "We have brought a story, Professor Gabler, that we should like your opinion on."

"We feel," said one of the girls who wrote poetry, "that it is something which has never received a fair hearing from the University—"

"Oh yes! Oh yes!' said old Gabler, not quite comprehending.

It was a dim room with books towering to the ceiling on all sides but one. The literati trooped in, introduced

themselves and perched on the couch. In a panic old Gabler seated himself at the desk. He reached helplessly for his calabash pipe then caught the eye of one of the girls who wrote poetry and put the pipe back on the table. . . . Girls were such leggy creatures nowadays. They frightened poor old Gabler when they advanced toward him in the classroom—pink and white doll faces mounted on bulging pairs of silken, flesh-colored stilts!

"Now," said Podhurst, complacently, "I shall read my story."

"Yes, yes!' said old Gabler in his rapid, defenseless way. "Yes, the story, Mr. Podhurst."

After looking about sternly for silence, Podhurst began in a low, portentous voice. As he read, the literati attentively nodded now and then, their eyes narrowing appreciatively. . . . The story, as had been boasted, was not in the least inhibited. It concerned the struggle of a young undergraduate poet to free himself from sex for the sake of his art.

At the end of the second page old Gabler coughed unhappily. But the girls who wrote poetry continued to nod and stare at him with all the blandness of youth.

He kept his eyes fixed miserably on his well-worn Rabelais on the top shelf. A lover of erotic literature, old Gabler had listened with some interest to the first few paragraphs; but this stuff was so puerile, so crass and inept that it soon filled him with vicarious shame. He was bored and sad. There was nothing one could say, he felt, to defend himself from these amazing young people who hemmed him in with their inexperience. . . . Once Podhurst glanced up at his victim, then went on more firmly than ever.

Old Gabler's mind wandered. Maybe it was the influence of the two girls who wrote poetry, maybe it was Podhurst's story, anyhow he suddenly imagined himself shipwrecked on a desert island with all the girls of the State University. He crouched frightened and alone against a palm tree, trying to hide. But there they were,

all the bold, leggy creatures who frightened him in the classroom—hundreds of them on a sandy beach powdering their noses and already looking about with sharp, bird-like glances to see if there were a man on the island! . . . Now they had discovered him and were exclaiming in little shrieks—

The room grew warm and dim. Young Podhurst's voice could scarcely be heard above the clamor of the girls on the island—

Still crouching against his palm tree, old Gabler watched fascinated as they advanced toward him. What dreadful creatures women were! They had none of the decent bashfulness found in men (young Podhurst, of course, that was different). Even now as they came toward him they were dropping the airs of modesty and coquetry they used to display at the University. No need for coyness here—

With a start old Gabler tried to listen to the story. But it was even a more terrible prospect than the island and the girls; he gradually returned.

An interesting study in history to watch the hundreds of faces surrounding his palm tree. Very fascinating. Should be called to the attention of the biology instructors, too. Who would have thought that women could revert to savagery so quickly? Gone the pink and white sweetness, the limpid smiles, the lowered lashes. And all the old euphemisms had disappeared from their talk now that they were shamelessly quarreling as to how they would divide him among them. . . . No more books, no more pipes, no more dreams; for women have always known that such things allowed men's minds to stray from women. Now he would always be a slave to the dim, fluttering pulse of the race . . . one man in a militant matriarchy—

—very close and stuffy in the room—

The island was swaying from side to side. The girls were pressing in from every direction, their large, moist, humorless eyes fixed upon him . . . the nearness of them

was suffocating him, shutting off the very light until everything grew dark before his eyes—

Old Gabler had fainted! So suddenly he slipped from the chair, the young people could only stare a second at his ashen face.

Then everybody ran at once for water. At least six glasses were brought. His eyes opened with startled quickness. He blinked up at them in confusion and groped weakly for the couch.

"Maybe we ought to go," said one of the men awkwardly.

"Awfully sorry," murmured the girls who wrote poetry.

After they had hastily excused themselves, old Gabler ventured at last to sit up. He looked wonderingly about the room. Somehow he had the feeling that it had been invaded by a football game or a bull fight; it no longer seemed his sheltered retreat with books to the ceiling on every side but one. On the floor lay a page of Podhurst's story which had been overlooked in the departure.

"Dear me!" said old Gabler aloud as he stared at it. "Dear me!'

VI

"—and then," says young Podhurst, "I noticed that he had kind of a shocked look on his face. But I kept right on reading and then—"

The literati crowd closed about him in a smoky booth of the You'll Come Inn. Podhurst has told the anecdote many times before and everybody knows when the climax is near. . . .

"—and then all of a sudden he fainted—like that! So shocked at the story he fainted! . . . He is," Podhurst always concludes with sad, gentle finality, "a mid-Victorian."

Fifth Episode:
RED HOT ALMA MATER

From an old A. O. G. song sung daily between the dessert and the coffee:

And brothers all we'll be
In the name of A. O. G. . . .

V: *Red Hot Alma Mater*

COMING from the smoke-filled house, they stood a moment in the tiled pergola savoring the chilly September evening. A mammoth flock of woolly clouds huddled in the sky with a few stars among, like the eyes of wistful beasts. One great car after another raced by, while in the interludes came the good, familiar sounds of distant cheering . . . women's laughter . . . a violin quivering remotely. . . .

"Not bad, uh Andy?"

"Not lugubrious," said Andy Protheroe, "at all."

He drew a deep breath of sensuous pleasure and leaned against a pillar where he could look down glittering Fraternity Row. It seemed delicious to be back again, to possess youth and gusto, to be an omnipotent senior. The college year hung just within reach like a smooth, unblemished apple. It was the evening of the first registration day.

After another moment Bill Lait spoke from around his pipe: "How didja get Browning's cousin?"

"A bad crayon sketch," said Andy decisively.

"That bird Kramer? The one with the ears."

"Let the ebony balls roll," said Andy.

Thus cryptically, intolerantly, he continued in a low murmur to arbitrate with his trusted henchman against a group of wabbly aspirants for the jeweled pin of A. O. G. He found a mournful pleasure in throwing these freshmen to the lions. Like Nero he was curious to see where they would land.

"And that beefy soak? The one who was so oiled he got tangled up with the table cloth. Hartridge's brother."

Andy reluctantly admitted him. "Blood's thicker'n gin."

They paused in their ratiocinations. The night—daring, exultant, and filtrated with romance—burdened the senses with intoxication, the spirit with unrest.

Up Fraternity Row the violin suddenly leaped an octave higher:

You can bring Rose
With the turned-up nose,
But don't bring Lulu!

The impossible absurdity of that! As amazing and irrational, as young and impossible and absurd as the conglomerate aims and desires of the eight thousand young people who had registered that morning.

Andy was not sentimental, but he was intentionally romantic—and between the two there is only a heart beat of difference. . . .

With narrowed eyes he surveyed the pale stars. "Theresa Belnap is back," he said, and there was a peculiar richness in his voice.

After an exclamation of surprise Bill said, "Then you might as well deed her the university."

For Theresa Belnap had come nearer to owning the institution than anybody except Andy Protheroe. A long time ago they had been enemies, each striving for social and political power. Then, like two great nations each fearing the other's aggrandizement, they had formed a distrustful alliance. And suddenly, one spring night, when there was a moon, slow music and the magic of the earth's drowsy fragrance, they forgot old feuds and discovered new ecstasies. But the next year (for reasons best known to the Administration) Theresa did not return. . . . Andy was left alone as benevolent despot of the campus. He remembered the episode vaguely with but a shadowy sorrow at its abrupt close.

Yet this morning when he had seen her in the throng of University Hall he stopped absolutely still, pierced by

memories as sharp as if everything had happened yesterday. As he watched her his heart had begun a rapid beat of excitement. She had been standing in a group of Dekes listening to their badinage with that familiar, absent-minded smile on her lips while her eyes went pirating through the crowd, seizing plunder of admiration. Tracy, Andy reflected, was never satisfied with the flattery close at hand—she was forever seeking it in the glances of strangers.

And she always made a bid for it by one arresting detail—this morning a slender, onyx-tipped stick. A dull tanbark her coat and dress and stockings might be; it was enough that they matched perfectly and lent themselves to curves which she wisely fostered in spite of the mode. Her felt hat she wore crushed thoughtlessly over one eye, as if inviting you to observe there were millions of hats but only one Tracy Belnap. She did not even need beauty. She had arrogance . . . and a slender, onyx-tipped stick. Her eyes went pirating and returned triumphantly with their plunder. And all the time on her mouth that amused, absent-minded smile!

The moment she had seen Andy she dashed across to him with her easy, hail-fellow-well-met manner, gripping his hand tightly, uttering flippancies in her high, drawling, slightly rough voice:

"Well, how's the old sheik? Once a senior, always a senior! Ye gods, I thought you would have vanished from the scene. You could have knocked me over with a lipstick. . . . Going to play around with me this year? That's fine. Do you Charleston? That's ecstatic. Listen. I'm looking for that little Rosamond Hampton. She's the best freshman on the campus and between you and me, confidentially, old Pi Omega is going to filch her from the Thetas. What's the percentage in standing around here? Let's gallop over to You'll Come Inn. Don't mind my boy friends."

And although she was genuinely delighted to see him, Andy knew, of course, that the surface of her enthusiasm

was drama for the benefit of bystanders. And he loved her for this drama . . . admired the careless hand on his arm, the way she swung her stick as she tripped off beside him, pretending a sweet oblivion to the fatuous and disgusted stares of (respectively) men and women.

Incomparable Tracy! The only woman in the world as flippant as himself.

So tonight, as he mused on the happenings of the day, he was sublimely content. Rushing had gone smoothly; he had the best room in the house; he had succeeded in registering for easy courses; his allowance was most generous . . . and Tracy was back! There was no reason why the new university year should not be brave and brilliant with social and political conquest.

"Telephone, Andy," said a sophomore, poking his head through the doorway.

As Andy Protheroe remembered it afterward he entered the telephone booth as innocently as a lamb going to be slaughtered. Imbued with colorful hopes he entered the telephone booth with his head held high, as befitted a perpetual senior, cheer leader, dramatic critic, eminent necker and politician. Afterward he nearly wept with self-pity when he recalled that he had been humming *Don't Bring Lulu*—it seemed such a pathetic, incongruously gay little detail.

"Listening," Andy said to the transmitter in his best offhand tones, for it just might be Tracy. Although it was more like Tracy to come and shout for him in front of the house if she wanted him, still . . .

"Hello," said a brisk, stiff-collar voice. "This is Dwight."

Andy shut his eyes very tightly as if he were in pain. He was in pain.

"I registered here this morning," said Dwight, "but unfortunately I failed to encounter you."

It was one of the few times in his life that Andy had found speech failing him. The only reply he could think

of was, "Oh, you did, did you?" but that seemed, somehow, the wrong thing.

"Hello," said Dwight again to the long silence. "Oh, hello. Hello there—"

"Be yourself," said Andy in hoarse disgust.

"Beg pardon?" said Dwight.

"I said, 'Quit yelping hello,'" muttered Andy, groping feebly out of his comatose condition. "Where are you, anyhow? How did you happen to come down here?"

"I'm at the Y. M. C. A. I have a splendid room here and a very congenial chap for a roommate. Perhaps you wouldn't care for him, but I think I shall find him very pleasant. Edward Branch—do you happen to know him?"

"Oh, that codfish," said Andy.

"Oh, well, *de gustibus non disputandum,*" replied Dwight airily.

"Talk Greek," said Andy, "or some dead language I can understand."

"Concerning Greek," said Dwight, "you must remember the remark of Euripides—"

"Give him my best regards," said Andy, "I'll drop in to-morrow."

He moved limply out of the booth wiping the sweat from his forehead. He was stunned by the inconceivable stupidity with which fate had allowed his careful plans to go awry.

For Andy had spent the whole summer vacation persuading his brother Dwight to attend a different university.

II

The trouble with Dwight was, Andy had always felt, that he bore the name Protheroe. As the brother of anybody else he would have been harmless, amusing. Through years of diplomacy and shrewd intrigue Andy

had established himself at the university as the one, the only Protheroe—a unique dictator of fashion and tradition with a hint of the immortal, of superhuman infallibility about him. Obviously Dwight belied all this. His very appearance was disastrous to the Protheroe legend.

In every way he was built on a larger scale than Andy—a great, finely formed youth who looked like a football star but was perversely interested in medieval literature. And his features were Andy's features startlingly become noble. He was a bigger, better Protheroe wearing a stiff collar, a Red Cross button and a halo of erudition. Andy's enemies could not have invented a more damning caricature.

In his fresh youthfulness he was an alarming suggestion of what Andy might have been when he first entered college. Merely to see Dwight was to lose faith in Andy's omnipotence, for if he had blundered in no other way he had committed a regrettable *faux pas* in having such a brother. . . . Ludicrous! As if a god had suddenly produced a poor relative.

Andy sat on the neat white bed in Dwight's neat white room and stared moodily at the one picture—a sepia reproduction of Millet's *Angelus*.

"I supposed you had gone to Columbia. You said you were going to Columbia. You even had your course of study made out . . . what's the big idea?"

Dwight sighed as one does when a child continues to repeat nonsensical questions. He had no notion of Andy's superiority. Thought of him as a wastrel and a moron, perhaps.

"I have explained it all several times," he said patiently. "I came here because of that course in medieval literature under Professor Lansing, which seems to be infinitely more comprehensive than any I could find elsewhere."

Andy dejectedly blew smoke rings. "All on account of a little two-by-four course under *that* egg?"

"One's courses," said Dwight, "are surely the deciding factor in choosing one's university."

"Two credits!" muttered Andy. Dwight had ruined him for as little as that. "Hell, man," he said, "you could get two credits for a course in business letter writing with practically no work at all."

"And how, pray," said Dwight scathingly, "would that further my education?"

He seemed so solitary, so earnest, so youthfully mistaken that Andy sighed with infinite pity.

"Listen, Dwight," he said, leaning forward. "You've got this university all wrong. It has by-products, sure, of culture and all that old rot—a little harmless learning is all right if you know how to take it lightly. But a man must keep his head and not allow himself to be swept away by the dangerous whirlpools of knowledge."

He was becoming eloquent and persuasive, expounding his convictions with deep seriousness.

"You think of college as a matter of ivy-colored towers where a dear, gray-haired old Alma Mater pins clean ideals on her children every morning and tells them bedtime stories in Greek and hands 'em choice, embroidered degrees for sincere endeavors. Wrong! The old girl has stepped out a bit since you first heard of 'er. She's doing a toe dance on top of the ivy-clad halls and she's slinging degrees with both hands like confetti—she'll instruct you in jazz and cheer leading, millinery, advertising, commercial photography, necking, or what have you? She's a red-hot Alma Mater now!"

Dwight's cheeks flushed at this sacrilegious picture. He shook his head. "My philosophy of life—" he began, but Andy seized upon the last word as a relentless terrier seizes upon a stick.

"Life isn't an autographed, limited edition bound in morocco—it's a dime novel with a lurid paper cover and it's circulated by the mob. How will this medieval racket help you to understand it?"

Dwight fixed Andy with an intolerant, contemptuous

stare. "I am scarcely looking for amusement," he said pompously. "I am looking for truth."

"Well, one of your own highbrows said it," retorted Andy, "and said it right: Truth is beauty. I can introduce you to a lot of truth right here in the best sororities any time you want to go out on a search party."

He flung his cigarette away and walked to the door where he lit another. "The fellows at the house asked me to bring you up for dinner tonight," he said in a hollow voice. There was no way out of it. No escaping the inevitable assumption of the A. O. G.'s that Andy's brother was worthy of the pin. And Andy could scarcely protest. . . . Blood was thicker than water, thicker than gin, thicker, unfortunately, than the anæmic fluid of scholasticism.

"I'll come if you like," said Dwight indifferently, even with a coldly dutiful note in his voice. He turned to his study table and added with his uncompromising stubbornness, "But I must be back at eight in order to prepare my German."

"Half-past seven," corrected Andy. "I wouldn't think of keeping you any longer. Mustn't start college, you know, by rioting around half the night."

In deference to Dwight's attitude of study he softly opened the door and tip-toed out.

III

Again Andy came from the heated, smoke-filled house and stood a moment in the tiled pergola—but this night he did not find savor in the chill September air; this night as he leaned against a pillar and looked down glittering Fraternity Row he found no gusto in life, only irritation. Beside him stood Tracy. She wound the silver ribbon of her dancing dress around his hand once and then unwound it. But he still glowered disconsolately at the avenue.

Tracy suddenly stood on tiptoe and put her arms around his neck.

"Nasty, cross old Andy," she said in his ear. "Stern, sour, secretive, gloomy, mournful old—"

"You tickle!" he groaned, pushing her away. Then he groped for her again, finding in her powdered silkiness some transient cure for his depression. They moved slowly up the steps and sat in the porch swing while, inside, the music began again and the shuffle of dancing feet wove a grotesque pattern through the syncopated melody.

"Tell me!" she said impatiently. She was very inquisitive, especially about people's troubles; there was nothing she loved better than to devise intricate escapes from them. She frequently lent money for gambling debts, advised culprits how to elude the dean, prevented the college newspaper from running damaging stories . . . but it was less from altruism than from love of intrigue. She was immensely selfish and demanded twice as much assistance from her own scrapes . . . which were not few. Incomparable Tracy.

"If it's a murder," she mused, leaning carelessly against him, "you can always write a diary for the Hearst papers or go into the movies. If it's lack of funds you can be chairman of some dance committee. . . . Well?"

If she thought she was alluring a story from Andy against his will she was wrong. Andy had never yet given out information to a woman without thinking twice and then thinking once more. Not even to darling Tracy whom he found that he still adored. It is one thing, to use Andy's own words, to love a woman and something else again to trust her.

No, he had decided some time ago that Tracy should inquire about his melancholy in just this way and that he would at last confide it.

"It concerns the skeleton in my family closet," he said. "Not long ago this fine, healthy collection of bones invaded the campus and now threatens my career. . . .

Not that he's a bad egg," he added with a delicate sense of justice. "On the whole, you know, he's a rather good egg. But youthfully interested in medieval lore and Phi Beta Kappa keys and other distressing garbage."

"Li'l Dwight?" said Tracy eagerly. "I've seen him. He looks like a Greek god."

"But in a stiff collar," objected Andy. "And those sickening Norfolk jackets. . . ."

"Oh, of course! But why don't you speak to him?"

"Speak to him!" moaned Andy. "Lady, if I were Paul Whiteman's orchestra itself he wouldn't even lend an ear. He's stubborn, that bozo is. Before I let him crash the A. O. G.'s I took him aside and spoke gently to him as a father might. 'My son,' I said, 'go easy on conversation about Matthew Arnold, Euripides and Edgar Guest. It just might be that the brothers would not place them easily as medieval celebrities, see?' And I said furthermore, very tactfully, 'Don't try to high-hat anybody around that joint or I'll knock you for a row of Japanese pagodas, understand?' "

"You couldn't really," Tracy pointed out brutally. "He's a trifle huger."

"A mere figure of speech," said Andy hastily. So often he had resented Dwight's gridiron build. By rights he should have been small and pasty.

"And did he upstage the brothers?" inquired Tracy, laughing at the notion.

"No," said Andy. "He tried to, but they didn't understand what he was talking about. Latin quotations," he added in a sick voice.

"Poor, poor Andy," murmured Tracy, stroking his shoulder. She had heard the theme bandied about on the campus for weeks now . . . the jibes from Andy's enemies . . . the little eager insurrections against his power. The ballot had turned against Andy in a minor election . . . a certain committee on which he had not been asked to serve.

"But tell me," she asked cautiously. "Is it true the A. O. G.'s didn't—?"

"Oh, they bid him all right," said Andy morosely. "They had to after I shot a white ball for Hartridge's brother. Good Lord, woman, they had to. But it was worse than that."

In the sudden light switched on from inside, she saw that his face was actually white. The narrative had been painful.

"Dwight refused the bid," he said tersely.

Tracy sprang excitedly to her feet. "Oh, but he couldn't! The—the *insult* to you!"

Andy, with his head in his hands, nodded. "It will look damned ridiculous," he said, trying to speak nonchalantly, "if it ever gets out."

Little as he might like it, a man was in honor bound to take his brother's fraternity. It was the code. A matter of *noblesse oblige*. And in the case of Dwight it would appear to the campus that he had not found his brother's fraternity good enough or that the brother of Andy Protheroe had been found wanting by the A. O. G.'s. The situation was especially endangering to Andy, for he had always been one of those social tight-rope walkers whose success balances insecurely on all the frail, attenuated wires of convention.

Malignant hands, he knew, were already reaching up to pull him down from the altitude where he walked so arrogantly.

And meantime, Dwight, undisturbed by such trivialities, attended his classes and made careful notes on the codes of love and honor in medieval times. . . .

Now, watching Tracy's face closely through his fingers, Andy began to broach the solution he had worked out. "If he would only fall for a woman! A woman who would insist that he take a fraternity and learn to dance and smoke and get human generally."

Her eyes sparkled. "It would be priceless comedy, too!"

"But there isn't," said Andy, "a woman in the world clever enough to make a single dent in that young Galahad's armor. . . ."

"Tag, I'm it," cried Tracy immediately. And she did a grave pirouette in front of him, her dress shimmering like a jade and silver pool in the lamplight, her soft, bare arms outstretched as if within their irresistible compass she could draw ten thousand Galahads to her breast.

IV

The next afternoon at three o'clock Andy walked across the campus with Dwight and casually, tripping from the opposite direction, appeared Theresa Belnap with her onyx-tipped stick like a weapon of sorcery in her pretty hand.

"You're going to buy me a drink," she said, flicking an imaginary bit of lint from Andy's lapel. She was in excellent form as the bold siren, wearing a sleek fur coat and jingling an amazing collection of bracelets. But in this moment Andy suddenly doubted her tactics. He wondered if she understood how impregnable Dwight was. Not that Dwight hated women. But he idealized them—and idealism is far less vulnerable than hatred.

"I can't," said Andy. "Gotta class. But Dwight can—he was only going over to the gymnasium to make flying leaps back and forth on the bars. One of those fish who believes in 'keeping fit.'"

"I don't believe," said Dwight, turning to Andy, "that I have had the pleasure of meeting Miss—Miss—" Then he bowed low as he stiffly made his acknowledgment, ponderously polite as an attaché of Queen Victoria's court.

Usually in such moments Andy longed to trip his brother, but just now he felt a pang of sympathy, for he knew what an agony of shyness Dwight's dignity concealed.

"Then lead me to a lemon coke," said Tracy, wriggling her hand under Dwight's unyielding arm.

Andy had stripped every excuse away, and Dwight was too honest to invent another.

"I shall be delighted," he said, looking wretched.

As they loitered off, her delicious voice floated back in airy monologue. "Going to play around with me this year? That's fine. Do you Charleston? That's heart-breaking. But I'll teach you. Listen . . . I'm looking for that little Rosamond Hampton. She's the best freshman on the campus, and between you and me, confidentially—"

In the secluded booth of the soft drink parlor, Dwight sat erect, avoiding Tracy's pursuing glances. His hair swept in a glossy wave back from his high forehead, and his clear, brown eyes were innocent of any emotion except embarrassment.

"You look as if you could play marvelous football," she was saying with an open look of admiration for his big-muscled frame.

"Of course," he said scornfully.

"But why don't you? It would be so ecstatic!"

"I don't believe," he demurred after careful thought, "that you are using 'ecstatic' in quite the right sense. . . . Unless, perhaps," he said with ponderous humor, "you are making a pun on the Greek root which originally meant to 'put out of place or derange.'"

"I'll bite, said Tracy cheerfully. "What's the catch in it?"

He blushed. "I beg your pardon?"

"I mean, is that your idea of light conversation?"

He sat with his big shoulders hunched as if defensively against her next remark. His inner confidence enabled him to take an immense amount of punishment doggedly. And he had been somewhat hardened against derision, having Andy for a brother.

But Tracy rose and lightly patted his hand. "You're all right," she murmured with her absent-minded smile.

"Come over and tell me some more about yourself tonight, won't you?"

He also arose with his air of heavy courtesy. " 'But yet a spirit still and bright, with something of an angel's light,' " he murmured, possibly under the delusion that young college women expected Wordsworthian compliments; or perhaps from some obscure ironic intent of his own . . . but most probably from the confusion of his shyness.

"Your line is awfully difficult to follow," said Tracy, catching his eyes and holding them for a second. "You mean that you will—?"

"You are very kind," he stammered. The pinkish color crept over his high cheekbones. He was visibly struggling against his desire to tell her about himself that evening. . . .

She quickly followed up her first lucky stroke. "I'm keen to get your point of view on things. You're so different from the other men around here."

" 'A poor player, who frets and struts his time upon the stage,' " he muttered hastily to conceal his agitation. He remembered a rhetoric theme he must hand in tomorrow. He had no time to waste in frivolous pursuits. His exaggerated ideas of chivalry were dismayed by the prospect of refusing a lady's invitation. It was all so dreadfully difficult.

"Then I'll expect you at eight," she said, smiling and swinging her stick as she walked out ahead of him.

He frowned. She expected him! No way to refuse her now.

"At eight," he echoed weakly.

V

The drawing room at the Pi Omega sorority was large, well furnished and unimaginative; but adjoining it was a tiny, crimson-hung den which Tracy as head of the

house had appropriated for her own retreat. She always used some glib hocus-pocus about needing it for the transaction of sorority business.

In one corner of the room there was a floor lamp—a mysteriously seductive creation of black chiffon and gold tissue and little dangling French flowers. Beneath the lamp sat Tracy.

"And so we walked along," she said, gesticulating excitedly, "and there at the end of the path was a great, big moon, oh, a monster of a moon, and it was reddish bronze like the face of a desert sheik or something . . . and do you know what he said?"

"Something in Latin," suggested Andy, yawning.

"No! He told me how far the moon was from the earth. And I said, 'Ye gods, do you think I came here to find that out?' "

Cynically, Andy stroked his narrow blond mustache. "But he's been coming to see you three weeks now. Getting him to hold your hand seems to be a life work."

Tracy sat very still. Suddenly she thumped her knee with a small, angry fist.

"*You wait!*" she cried furiously. "You think I can't do it, don't you? Why, he's only a freshman pretending to be a great stone face! Do you think I'm going to be defeated by a line of statistics? *You wait.* The moon isn't nearly as far from the earth as he thinks, not by a darn sight."

"There, there, there," said Andy drawing her up into his arms and kissing the back of her sleek, shingled head. "Forget your new vocation and come for a ride."

"S-s-st! Look out!" whispered Tracy, for the curtain had parted and in another moment Dwight was standing awkwardly in the doorway.

"The hell," said Andy under his breath; then he faced his young brother with a debonair smile. "Greetings, Dwight, and all that old rot. Have a chair, have a drink, have a cigarette—"

"Thank you," said the youth, with tight lips. He

looked at Tracy . . . and she was most beautiful beneath the mysterious black and gold lampshade. Then he looked at Andy, and an unmistakable shadow of jealousy made Dwight's brown eyes very dark. "I believe I will," he said taking a cigarette with large, unaccustomed fingers.

"Don't go," called Tracy, as Andy started toward the door.

Behind Dwight's back Andy struck the attitude of an Egyptian dancer. "Am I," he demanded haughtily, "my brother's keeper?"

VI

The night that Dwight quarreled with Andy about the use of the greenish blue roadster (which Andy had always tacitly assumed was his, alone) marked the beginning of a series of triumphs for Tracy. It appeared that she was not satisfied with shattering the sorry scheme of Dwight but must also remold him nearer to the heart's desire with a few extra touches such as the Charleston, and trousers even wider than Andy's.

In truth, Andy did not entirely approve of squat, amber cigarette holders and flapping hat brims—but he supposed indulgently that youth must have its fling. . . .

Dwight was rapidly becoming, as his brother put it, a denatured high brow.

And one night he found an excellent opportunity for chiding Dwight about his neglected work. Andy had been dancing with Rosamond Hampton, the exquisite, golden-haired doll whom Tracy pronounced the best freshman on the campus. He had first invited Tracy, but she had absently refused—she had not a moment to spare from her messianic pursuit.

On the way home Andy parked the car in front of the Y. M. C. A. and went up to Dwight's room. But it was almost an hour before Dwight appeared.

He flushed when he saw Andy waiting, for he was still

the shy boy sometimes in spite of having learned to jump into the air and click his heels together while dancing. But there was little trace left of his early intellectual egotism and he seldom muttered a Latin quotation now, having been advised emphatically against the distressing practice.

Andy reflected that he might even become an asset to the Protheroe name—conceivably he might do some brilliant thing and keep the Protheroe tradition alive for many years after Andy was gone. . . . Pride of family . . . and all that old rot.

"Well, bum," said Andy roughly, "what have you been up to?"

"Oh, nothing," said Dwight, smiling self-consciously. "Just fooling around."

"Wouldn't know a medieval legend any more if you met one clanking his armor all over the campus," commented Andy.

Dwight frowned. "Listen, Andy. I've been thinking . . . I'm awfully glad you came up, because I wanted to—uh—ask you. Is a fraternity bid ever open to a fellow a second time?"

Andy coughed and gave a rather good imitation of profound thought while Dwight squirmed uneasily in his chair.

"We-ell," murmured Andy at last, "I'll tell you: it may be that it could be fixed up, and then again, one never knows. What fraternity were you thinking of?" he asked politely.

"Yours," said Dwight faintly. "Of course."

For the first time in his life, Andy saw brotherly awe and respect in the young tyro's eyes, and he was magnificently content. But he couldn't resist paying Dwight out for old injuries. Those times when Dwight, an unspeakable high school prodigy, had presumed to lecture Andy for his habit of flunking everything!

"Now see here, Dwight," said Andy sternly, "you're getting pretty damned sloppy about your work, I under-

stand, and if you want to be considered by any fraternity you've got to start plugging like the devil. In other words, a little more footwork on the old Greek and medieval stuff, and soft pedal on the feminine research."

"Dead right!" said Dwight, looking very solemn and a trifle scared. "You know that's what *she* says. She wants me to stop running around now and get down to serious study. And so, of course, I shall."

Andy realized that the end of the romance with Tracy was going to make Dwight very unhappy for a time. . . . It was only kind to wait until it melted gradually into nothingness; and meanwhile, Andy light-heartedly enjoyed the soft wiles of Rosamond Hampton. He could have adored her, he knew, but for the thought of renewing his affair with Tracy now her amazingly comprehensive task was done.

He called her up. "Tracy, do you realize that the great Allied Drive is finished?"

"Yes, I realize it!" she cried gayly.

"And will you let me come and pin the Croix de Guerre on you this evening?"

"Well—" she hesitated. "Dwight—"

"Tracy, for Heaven's sake, shut up about Dwight," he bantered. "For the last three months I've heard nothing but Dwight. No, you couldn't do this because Dwight was coming! No, you couldn't do that because Dwight wouldn't understand! I don't believe you've given anybody else a date for weeks, now have you?"

"No, I honestly haven't, said Tracy. "Haven't I been a faithful—a faithful—"

"Well, a faithful what?"

"Come over," she said gently, "and I'll tell you."

As soon as he entered the little room with the crimson hangings she ran to meet him with both hands outstretched. But to his alarm she began to utter incoherent things that he did not understand until the final sentence was reached.

"Isn't he really adorable?" she cried. And, "Isn't he

too cunning in his new pledge pin?" she demanded. And, "I'm going to make him work hard and finish school in a few years," she declared.

"You see, Dwight and I were secretly married about two months ago," she said. "I've always wanted to absolutely *create* the man I married." She smiled through Andy with her most preoccupied smile. "Isn't it simply immense?"

"Immense," nodded Andy. "One might almost say monstrous."

He lit a cigarette with intent, meticulous care, and gravely placed the burnt match in an ash tray.

Suddenly he began to laugh. First he laughed painstakingly, then sincerely, then with divine talent. When his laughter grew uncontrollable he actually believed that he was immortal—a god enabled to laugh at all things: romance and the boredom of melancholy, the desperation of mind, the stupidity of matter, and all the myriad things that are reasons for men's dying. . . .

"Tracy! My God, Tracy," he said, wiping mirth from his eyes, "I'm your brother-in-law!"

Sixth Episode:
THE BOYS IN THE HOUSE

From the Regulations of the State University:

> *Students not residing in dormitories or fraternity houses are allowed to live only in those rooming houses which have been approved by the University. A list may be obtained at the Registrar's office.*

VI: *The Boys in the House*

SHE sat in the porch swing, her rose-colored crepe dress making a bright island of color among the dark suits surrounding her. Two students on her right, two on her left, a youth pushing the swing gently. Ted Allison on the railing idly fingering a guitar. When he struck a known chord the six suddenly burst into a snatch of song:

"Just pickle my bones in alcohol!"

Passersby stared up at the porch. Anita laughed loudly—"Bet those old hens think this is *some* wild party!"

One of the freshmen spoke, his words tumbling over each other: "Say, a bird told me yesterday that you were the most popular girl around this campus. Said he never saw you without five men."

Anita smiled but indulgently, without triumph. Once she would have flushed with pride but now she understood many things. The men she was seen with were always of a certain group, a group constituting for her a separate clan, almost a distinct race: the boys in the house. . . . The freshmen chattered while Ted Allison plucked his guitar softly. She stared down at her rose-colored dress. She was very unhappy.

II

Mrs. Graham had taken the big thirteen-room house when her husband died; she knew of no other way to make a livelihood, and it was a very certain way in the

small university town where students clamored daily for rooms at all of the houses in the campus neighborhood. Mrs. Graham had cleared out the attic for a sleeping dormitory and thereby was justified in putting three boys in each study room unless more sophisticated students rebelled. For that reason she liked freshmen and hated seniors. She specialized in freshmen. Freshmen meekly took what was given them and as Mrs. Graham said, "They do wrestle and break up the chairs but they hardly ever answer back when I call them down."

Of course there was the fraternity problem with freshmen. At first when the best dressed and financed freshmen began to get telephone calls and invitations to dinner Mrs. Graham and Anita held long conferences in their shabby cramped living quarters.

Anita and her mother learned to keep informed by listening to telephone conversations. Pressed against the double doors that separated the scabby hall from their living-room, Anita would strain her ears to overhear the faint remarks.

"Mama, I think that Mr. Beck is being rushed—he's talking to that fraternity bunch now. He's going to dinner tonight."

"Oh Anita! *Do* you think so?"

"Yes, and that was a Beta car he went away in last night."

"Oh, what shall I do? I can't afford to have my rooms empty."

"Oh, don't worry. I don't think he'll get in there. He told me one fellow at the Beta house hated him."

"Well, I surely hope he gets black-balled. I can't—can't afford—" Mrs. Graham pressed her limp apron to her wet, anxious eyes. . . . But she had learned very soon not to rent her rooms eagerly to the first comers. Shrewdly she began to select homely, pock-marked boys, boys whose names ended in "stein" and "offski," boys who were "working their way"—they always paid most promptly—boys who blushed and stammered and were

too shy to ask for hot water. Even with this new selective system she sometimes made mistakes. It was difficult to tell just whom the fraternities would pounce upon. It had seemed incredible that they should ignore Buddy Hummel and choose Carpenter instead.

"Mama, you'd never think it, but I do believe that dumb Mr. Carpenter is being rushed!" Nothing escaped Anita's sharp little ears.

But Mrs. Graham did not cry any more. She was no longer helpless. She lurked, a grim sentinel, about the halls and confronted the jubilant Mr. Carpenter when he returned from his first fraternity dinner: "Now Mr. Carpenter, I've heard something about you being interested in that Phi Delt frat. Now Mr. Carpenter, you know and I know that you agreed to stay the whole semester out. If you quit me right in the middle of the semester the Phi Delts will have to pay the rest of your rent. That's flat, Mr. Carpenter!"

Happiness fled from poor Mr. Carpenter's face. He would never dare ask the fraternity—! Besides they hadn't bid him yet! He glanced fearfully about the hall as if in dread that wrathful Phi Delts would overhear him bandying their sacred name with this irreverent landlady who called it—oh, unspeakable vulgarity!—a *frat.*

III

After the denouement of the Carpenter affair Mrs. Graham felt herself to be a seasoned, professional landlady of no mean talent. Her technic had been artistic. . . . In her long lean wrapper she had waited in the darkest shadows of the hall until Carpenter and his accomplice had stealthily carried the trunk to the very bottom of the stairs. Then she came forward: "This has gone far enough, my fine young gentlemen. Somebody has got to pay Carpenter's rent for the rest of the

semester. And the Dean of Men will back me up in *that* statement."

Carpenter frightened and very ashamed of the distressful scene. The representative from the fraternity house suave and politely ingratiating: "Oh now, Mrs.—uh, of course we expected to do that. I was just helping Carpenter out with his trunk you know. We fully expected to pay the rest of his rent."

Mrs. Graham had discovered the potency of Dean Abrams' name and she used it glibly after that.

While the bickering went on Anita listened from her davenport-bed in the living-room. How did Mama *dare* talk like that to Phi Delts? She had always hoped to go to a dance at their beautiful house—even if she was a town-girl—lots of town-girls went to the fraternity dances. Back in High School she had proudly told everybody that she was going to the University, but her father's death had changed all that. She had to help poor Mama make beds and sweep the rooms. Just the same she was as pretty as those University girls and lots snappier, many of the fellows said. What did University girls have to act so smart about? They let on as if their classes and sororities were something mysterious and wonderful. The fellows made fun of them behind their backs, at least the boys in the house did.

Now that Carpenter was pledged Phi Delt, Anita no longer thought of him as "dumb." She told herself she had always known there was something about him . . . if only Mama hadn't jawed him he might have taken her to his formal in the spring. For the rooming-house did not mean a livelihood to Anita. It meant gaiety, excitement, popularity. Her mother encouraged her to be pleasant to the students; she often said in a burst of kindliness, "Anita, we must try to make this a real home for them. They stay so much better if things are home-y. And if they feel dissatisfied and grouchy they leave all the lights burning just for meanness." Mrs. Graham said, too, that it did her good to see young people have

a good time. On Sunday afternoons she hovered about the group at the piano, beaming and nodding her head in time to Anita's sketchy jazz.

Mrs. Graham thought her daughter very popular and all the freshmen thought so too; for a long while Anita had believed it herself. When a freshmen was pledged to a fraternity he nearly always took her to his first dance. He was not sure of his dancing and it didn't matter if he stepped on Anita's toes; but when he learned the new steps she saw him go by in a taxi to his formal . . . with a sorority girl. How many clumsy youths she had taught to Charleston, even supplying the music herself by whistling breathlessly! How many she had guided wearily around and around the uneven hall floor, kicking aside the rugs and shrilling severe directions! She had made a marvellous dancer of Buddy Hummel. She had been very proud of him. And from the gallery where onlookers could watch the spectacle of the Sophomore Cotillion she had seen him floating dreamily with an Alpha Xi—that very lounging glide that Anita had shown him!

When she had mastered these first hard lessons in ingratitude—so difficult for her years—she had turned for companionship to the unpledged who remained faithful. Year after year she knew them all with the commonplace familiarity of family life. They loafed about the house watching her wipe dishes, dust, make beds or mend her stockings. When her mother fitted a new dress on Anita she could never be sure they would not burst in. Buddy Hummel, small, wavy-haired, aristocratic, would sneer in his girlish voice, "Oh boy, Anita's getting a Poiret gown! Going to lead the Senior Ball with Andy Protheroe, Anita?" Ferdie Harbarger, who came from Chicago's West Side, would shout, "That's a mean color!" Red Bernstein, very kind and tall and well-meaning, would blunder, "My mother's got a swell dress of that same kind of goods." The Burnham twins would look sheepish and say nothing. They would hurry up to their room, to

their slide-rules and T-squares, terribly afraid that she would usurp some of their precious time.

She learned that many of these rooming-house students cloaked their loneliness and envy of glittering inner circles in sarcasm and cynical comment. She joined them eagerly, for she had the same emotions to hide. Out on the porch spring evenings they all drew close together in a little alien clan watching the cars flash by and the sauntering groups of garrulous men and girls. From their sheltering porch they slung barbed jests.

"There goes McFee. You can almost see his head swelling inch by inch, cantcha?"

"Who's with him?"

"Ah, that Protheroe fish. Don't you know him by his Oxford bags?"

"My Gawd, he thinks he's the Prince of Whales."

"Oh brother! See that baby! What's she doing—a toe dance? She's a Upsilon Phi—in my Chem Quiz."

"Yah! All those Upsilon Phi-gees give me a pain in the neck. All oil cans if you ask me."

"Gosh, I heard they were having an open house." Red Bernstein was always blundering and naively wistful. "What does that mean? Can anybody go?"

"Anybody, hell!" Little Bud Hummel's drawl was most gentle when he swore. "Fraternity men. Planning to go, Red? Some sweet sob-sister'll throw a cup of tea in your face."

Bud had been asked to join at least four small fraternities, but he had planned to be an A. O. G. and he would consider nothing else. Now it was the end of his junior year . . . too late . . . but what was the difference? His father would send him to Paris after graduation. Would anybody in Paris care whether he wore an A. O. G. pin? . . .

"Say fellows," Anita would pipe loudly, "Where's that great big Airedale taking that little bit of a Delt?"

At the raucous shout of laughter she would feel warm and almost content. . . . She was jealous of the Orph,

the crap-shooting, the poker games that lured the boys finally away. She would still sit watching the couples strolling by to their dances and the lights prickling out in the Kappa house next door. Or maybe from sheer weariness of spirit she would surrender to Bernstein's entreaties and go to the You'll Come Inn with him hoping that no one saw her. . . .

IV

It was strange how little the boys in the house entered into the life of the University. They attended no lectures that were not enforced, no class functions, no entertainments except the Orpheum. Once Bud Hummel bought a symphony concert ticket but was jeered so relentlessly that he gave it to Mrs. Graham. Of convocations at which the president and the deans presided they agreed that they would "rather sleep at home." They cared nothing for athletics but they always turned out for basketball and football games. As they clattered down the steps in a noisy self-conscious, straggling crowd Anita would jealously watch them go feeling that at last the University had a grip which snatched them away from her.

They seemed to feel the same jealousy on evenings when she happened to have a date. She would wander about the halls happily conscious of her new dress and her shining satin slippers waiting to be noticed. Bernstein, coming down to the telephone, would linger to stare at her: "Gosh, you look slick. How about a movie?"

"I've got a date." She did a few dance steps arranging her silver ribbon girdle.

Other boys leaned over the bannister; some of them came halfway down in bathrobes and old sweaters, collarless and in slippers. "Oh Je's! Anita's got a date!" Ferdie Harbarger who fancied himself as a man of the

world did a few insinuating dance steps on the floor above and whispered something to Bud, who laughed.

Anita's face grew warm but she decided they didn't mean anything. She had learned to ignore a little vulgar teasing but she was always on the alert ready to defend herself harshly and loudly. She was definitely conscious that they reserved one code for her and one for the University girls. They were affectionately rude to her, a town-girl, but she did not think they jeered her secretly as they did the co-eds to whom they were sometimes hypocritically polite.

The Burnham twins annoyed by the noise in the hall shut their door reprovingly and the talk turned upon them and the inconsequential topic of studies. . . . Anita saw that the boys were sorry when the doorbell rang at last. They returned drearily to their endless "chewing the rag in Bud's room." They talked about everything—some were didactic, some coarse, some eager and some mere listeners. They had a language of their own—an easy, loose-jointed speech that scrambled agilely over the hills and hummocks of their uneven themes: salesmanship, the South Sea Islands, southpaws, women's clothes, automobiles, rabbis, the cost of building materials, mythical chorus girls they had known, deep sea diving, Eskimo dogs, dicks and dives, their uncomplimentary opinions of Dean Abrams, President McLaren, Dr. Fannicott and Professor Gabler; how to "pull an A in Ec"; how to escape military drill; whether gin or whiskey was better for the stomach; bootleggers and semi-soft collars, Chicago cabarets and brands of cigarettes. About the least of these subjects they wrangled violently for hours.

When a man came to take her out Anita hurried him away before he could hear the loud discussion and the noisy scuffle that usually terminated it. Those startling thumps on the ceiling! That ghastly sound of loose plaster pattering down inside the walls! Her mother's voice: *"Boys! Somebody else wants to study if you don't!"*

V

But the only man Anita had ever really cared about was Ted Allison. Her spirit still quivered when she thought of that first meeting with Ted. She had gone to a fraternity dance with a freshmen who once roomed at her house. In the dressing-room she stood before the mirror carefully powdering her pretty, sullen little face, rearranging the black sophisticated curl she always plastered flat against her forehead, tightening her long green earrings. The other girls were gathered in sorority groups. They stared at her silently. She returned proud cold glances as she nervously smoothed the lace of her green and silver dress—the dress her mother had hastily finished hemming just before she came. She saw the other girls' faces also looked set and hard as if they, too, were assisting at some deadly serious project. They would not commence to laugh and chatter vivaciously until they went down to the men.

A fierce emotion of rebellion arose in her against some strange enemy—it seemed to her that it was the University. . . . Standing there in the dressing-room, very young but wise, and taut with her wisdom, uncomfortable and almost at bay, she felt sickeningly oppressed by the heavy fragrance of silks and powders. She knew vaguely that she wanted some undiscovered way to express mad gaiety and that this University dance was a makeshift poor and artificial.

. . . Then later dancing with Ted Allison she seemed to have found it. "Let's not dance like this," he said gently when she confidently begun the new steps she knew so well; "let's dance like we feel." And again, "Let's not dance in here. Let's dance out on the grass." They had danced on the grass in the shadow of the tall hedge . . . her slippers grew sodden with dew . . . she did not care. He stopped and held her away from

him. He was very tall and dark and his eyes shone. "Why you pretty little thing!" he cried. "You pretty little thing!" They danced a long time although the music died away and the earth seemed to melt from beneath their feet.

When he asked what house she belonged to Anita answered defiantly, "I'm a town-girl."

"I knew you were too nice for a co-ed. Too darling. . . ."

Her cheeks burned with the greatest happiness she had ever known. Throughout the following weeks she had been sure that she would see Ted again. When she looked into a mirror she viewed herself through his eyes—a creature mysterious and lovely upon whom the enchantment of romance might gently dwell. At nights when she lay waiting for sleep to come, she whispered the words that had passed back and forth like a golden shuttle between them. . . .

She had been sure that she would see him again, but she had not known that all the magic would be gone.

One day her mother told Anita they had a new roomer. "He seems so nice for a senior—he doesn't want to room at his house this semester, it's such a noisy frat." The name of this senior was Ted Allison.

When her mother went back into the living-room, Anita crouched in a corner of the hall seat crying shamelessly. Ferdie Harbarger and Bernstein came in and she did not try to conceal her red eyes and damp handkerchief. They stood awkwardly about her, friendly and comforting, spinning little jokes and yarns to cure the blues she said she had. She thought wearily that it was no use trying to conceal anything. They lived her life and she lived theirs. And now Ted Allison would know her that way, would see her disheveled and sleepy, drudging and commonplace. No mystery—no enchantment of romance. They would know each other too well. He would just be one of the boys in the house. . . .

VI

This evening as she sat in the porch swing she dully watched Ted plucking at his guitar. He played it all day —that same tune over and over.

A passing girl stared enviously up at the porch where Anita sat with the six men.

"Look at that girl stare," said a freshman. "Gosh, she thinks you're popular."

Ted Allison gazed interestedly after the passing girl. He strummed his guitar . . . that same chord over and over and over.

Anita looked down at her rose-colored dress. She was very unhappy.

Seventh Episode:
BIGGEST IN THE WORLD

From the Catalogue of the State University:

> *Sports and athletic activities are so administered as to produce mental and moral improvement as well as physical development.*

VII: *Biggest in the World*

HE had never been a distinguished football player in high school. Maybe it was because of his dreamy indolence which made him careless at practice and kept him up late at nights to read books of travel and adventure. Anyhow, McFee went unnoticed until the end of his senior year.

It was the day of the annual game with Newona. Big John Cullom, the county attorney, sat in the little wooden stand dwarfing the crowd with his importance as a former football star of the State University and a well-known alumnus who took in all the big college games. His hat was tipped back and he smoked a cigar genially, aware that the fluttering high school girls were watching him. He was paying no attention to the game, for Newona was far ahead, when his roving eye suddenly caught the beginning of a twenty-yard run by one of the Lark boys.

It was a flash of the future McFee genius . . . that same twisting, shifting dance across the field, even if awkwardly and boyishly done——

"Who is that kid?" Cullom asked when the cheering ended.

A dozen people told him proudly.

"Ask him to see me after the game."

He noted with amusement the obvious bashfulness of the red, scrubbed youth who was presented to him half an hour later. "A nice little run you made today," he said in his hearty, booming voice. "Where you going to school?"

"Why—" McFee admitted hesitantly, gazing desper-

ately at a point beyond the great man's ear. "Why, I been thinking of Potts Academy—it's near and it's not expensive and they give a good business course there——"

"I've been telling him," Terry Hume interrupted tremulously, "that he ought to go to the State University, on account of football." For four years Terry had made Lloyd McFee his hero in the Lark High School. *"I'm* going to the State University," he added.

"Potts Academy!" snorted big John Cullom, and he laughed his loud laugh. "Who the hell ever heard of Potts Academy? Now you listen to me, son, I *know.* You go straight to the State University this fall and tell Shifty Miles, the coach, that I sent you. And if you're any good, like I think you're going to be, us aloomni will take care of you if you ever need anything, see? The old State U has got the money, the crowds—everything—and let me tell you, we're going to have the sweetest stadium in the country, biggest in the world, they say. Now you listen to me, son, don't let me hear of you going anywhere else."

II

It was a prevailing belief in football circles at the State University that any sort of civility to an athlete who hadn't yet proved himself tended toward softness. Above the tramp of feet on the turf the coaches' voices were barking furiously.

"Whassa matter!" yelled one of the assistants. "You —*you* I mean—" and McFee's ears burned as he saw that he was indicated by the pointing fingers "—got lead in your shoes? You run like an eight-day clock, you!"

Gone was all the careless enthusiasm of football at Lark, the high spirits, youth and rivalry. There was no time for waste motion here. It was deadly serious, stark and purposeful as a bayonet drill. Down the field came

the varsity eleven, jaws set, lips tight, muscles and brains trained to such Prussian perfection that the eleven men seemed as many parts of a great, crushing machine. In the empty stands were little knots of students speculating on the various games announced for the season and planning their bets. Among them sat Terry Hume, nervously twisting his freshmen cap in his hands as he sought out McFee in the awkward squad.

After a week of it McFee was discouraged. He was a young egotist and he was hurt and fierce and resentful because the coaches barked at him, because no fraternity had bid him, because he was unrecognized. But for the fear of being called yellow he would have quit the football squad.

He was surprised when he learned that he had won a place as halfback on the freshman team, and he had no energy left for self-congratulations when several fraternities began making overtures. It was Terry who saw the real glory of it all.

"Gosh, Lloyd," he gulped, quick moisture springing to his eyes, "you're going to be a big man here some day."

Terry had never been noticed by any fraternity although he had a hero in each of them. Evenings after he finished work in the cafeteria where he earned his meals, he loved to attend the numerous pep sessions and mass meetings which were always being held somewhere on the campus. He loved the sentimental loyalty which swelled within him as if it would burst his fragile chest when the band played *Hail, Alma Mater.* His admiration all but choked him when some football man gave a halting talk pleading for support of the team. He thrilled and enthused (as he would have expressed it) at any form of collegiate sentimentality—the game, the class, the campus.

The mighty steel structure of the new stadium was rearing itself out of the prairie on the edge of town and meetings were held every week in the drive for funds.

Volunteer solicitors implored and bullied and threatened from the platform. For the honor of the old school, they said. Another half-million dollars was needed. Alumni all over the country were asked to "give until it hurt." Stubborn or impecunious victims were held up to contempt. The "high-powered" salesmen employed to manage the drive had plastered the State with posters.

Early in the year Terry had signed for a hundred-dollar contribution, which was more than he could afford as a student working his way through the University. But still he felt guilty. At each meeting it seemed to him that he was being singled out by the scornful finger of the orator as a man disloyal to the old school.

Troubling letters came in every mail. . . . "All together now, let's go! Another half-million dollars is needed to pay for the world's biggest stadium. *Are you sure you have given your share?* If you have already given, are you sure you have given ENOUGH? Are you one of the COWARDS who will always be ASHAMED to look the new stadium square in the face?"

One night at a mass meeting Andy Protheroe spoke. The campus politician was never more suave and forceful. Despite the fact that he had not contributed to the stadium and had no intention of contributing, he was tremendously moved by his own words as he rose to an impassioned climax. . . .

"Can we let a paltry half-million dollars stand between us and the world's biggest stadium?" he demanded—he paused and his voice was tense and dramatic when he resumed. "Already thousands have been spent in publicity for this drive—even more thousands must be spent unless the sons and daughters of the State University respond with the perfect tribute of loyalty."

Seated alone in one of the front seats, Terry Hume was limp with emotion. When the pledge cards were handed about, he signed for three hundred dollars.

III

After spring football practice in the languid warmth of May, McFee welcomed the summer vacation. He had earned a place on the varsity squad, but still he was doubtful. All his old zest for the game was gone; only his ambition for campus glory kept him faithful to the daily workouts. During the year he had worried about his courses in the College of Commerce, for he had narrowly escaped conditions in two subjects.

From June until August he worked with a road gang on the new state highway near Lark to earn spending money for the coming college year. And as he shoveled cement or dug ditches, he wondered if football were worth the candle. For young McFee had a greater dream of himself than football glory . . . a dream of a day when he would be a commercial soldier of fortune in far, exotic countries. In homage to this dream he had registered in the College of Commerce, and now he had little time or energy for study. He was a romanticist but he was an extremely practical, hard-headed young romanticist, and he often wondered about that dim, misty future of adult life which stretched out beyond graduation to the infinity of middle age and family and responsibility. Gridiron renown, were he able to win it, could not help him much with this unknown, sometimes terrifying life of the future.

He had made up his mind when he returned for his sophomore year in September. No more football! . . . He simply would fail to report to the squad.

Terry was horrified, almost tearful. "Lloyd, you can't mean it! Nobody could do a thing like that!"

But McFee could. He ignored the football field for a week and began his advanced courses without interruption. Then one day he returned from an economics class to find Nelson, one of the assistant coaches, waiting for him.

A blond giant who had been a star tackle on the team several years ago, Nelson lost no time in preliminaries.

"What the devil's the matter with you, McFee?" he said bluntly. "Why aren't you out to practice?"

"I'm not coming out," McFee said sullenly.

"Why not?"

"Why—why, because I need more time for my courses."

Nelson's suspicions deepened at this obviously false excuse—here was a young fellow with a badly swelled head. "All right," said Nelson, "you'll probably lose your place on the squad."

The assistant coach turned on his heel and left. This was the sort of treatment to bring 'em around; he had cured more than one swelled head this way. Of course McFee would report in a day or two . . . best prospect of all the sophomores in the conference, but it would never do to let him know it.

At the end of another week, when McFee persisted in his strange conduct, they came in groups—his fraternity brothers, loyal co-eds, campus politicians—to argue and plead with him. Old Professor Hebron, of the Economics Section, who hadn't missed a game in twenty years, gravely said, "McFee, you'll never have a friend in college if you fail us like this." Al Robinson, director of the stadium drive, called McFee on the telephone—"Good God, man!" he exploded. "You don't mean to tell me you wouldn't do your bit, do you?"

The secret could no longer be kept in this emergency —everybody knew now that the greatest backfield prospect the school had found in years refused for some insane reason to play. The weight of the institution was brought to bear upon his stubbornness; and still McFee held out, offering everybody the same absurd reason. And as if ironically, he was allowed no time for study, hardly a moment in which to snatch his meals. But he was a determined young man with a dream of the future

and even threats of social extinction could not move him. He was bewildered, awkward, but firm.

Finally Coach Shifty Miles, whose salary was twice that of most professors, tossed the dignity of his position to the winds and sent for McFee. He dismissed all underlings from his large, brisk office in the gym building and placed a chair where the light would shine full on the obdurate youth's face; for, as the sporting pages have said, Coach Miles was a master of psychology.

He was a small man with hard blue eyes, outthrust chin and a stiff fringe of clipped hair—"the bulldog among athletic mentors," the sporting pages have often called him, "a man who never quits until the last down." He leaned over the glass-topped desk and regarded McFee in silence a long time.

"McFee," he said at last in a low voice, "I'm ashamed of you. Yes, I'm ashamed of you. I never thought I'd have to call you in here to ask you why you haven't got the guts of a rabbit." A very outspoken man, the coach was, and now his words snapped sarcastically. "Where you ought to be is in the Home Economics section."

Angry tears leaped to the youngster's eyes. He wasn't yellow. He muttered incoherent words to that effect.

For a week he had held his ground against all of them, but his courage oozed fast before the terrible prospect of being condemmed by a big man like Coach Miles. He dropped his eyes.

Miles felt sorry for the flushed, desperate youth facing him, but his eyes were still cold and contemptuous. "How you going to prove it, McFee?"

"I'll play!" McFee blurted.

"That's the talk to give 'em!" said Coach Miles warmly. "I knew you were all right, Mac. Just a little nervous, that's all. Now forget it and come around to practice tomorrow."

IV

The great stadium was nearing completion. Its square walls of steel and cement rose to an astounding height which belittled the field below. And yet it was not flying and lithe and joyous, this monument to a game of youth —it was efficient. Its tier upon tier of seats went up abruptly to the sky, and it was guarded everywhere by ticket offices.

The campaign for funds had reached a climax. In the offices of Al Robinson were thousands of cards signed by students and alumni which promised money in regular installments, but interest had lagged and many of the payments were overdue. . . . Even the vast stadium was dependent upon such trivially human things as new hats, lost jobs, birth and death.

"$300,000 needed this fall!" groaned the tabloid newspaper sent out by the publicity men. "Now is the time to prove your loyalty! . . ." Delinquents were threatened with legal collection and loss of ticket privileges at the games. The faithful were praised. H. Willis Gobey, '19, had given up tobacco in order to meet his October installment, it was said, while Marcelline Wertz, ex-'17, had paid an installment in advance instead of buying the baby a white plush robe.

One busy day Al Robinson was pacing back and forth in his private office dictating a stirring editorial concerning the shame which would be felt by the university dead on the fields of France if stadium pledges were not paid more promptly. . . . The door opened and a small, pale sophomore was announced.

"It's important, he says," the secretary apologized.

In gulps Terry Hume told his story. It was the only time in his life that he had ever approached glory, except from the bleachers, and he was properly meek. All his life he had cheered others; now he was for the moment a hero himself.

Al Robinson, who had always been a professional big

brother to problems and propositions, was puzzled this time. . . . "You say you're behind with your stadium dues and you want a job working on the stadium so you can pay 'em——?"

Terry nodded. I've decided," he said earnestly, "to drop out of school a year or two until I get all my stadium pledge paid—it's the only way I could see." He looked up humbly at Robinson. "And I thought maybe you might help to get me a job on the stadium—you know, among the workmen."

In all his long, successful career as a promoter of drives Al Robinson had never met a situation like this. He warmly shook the youth's hand and promised to do what he could, but he had a vague feeling that something was not quite right about it all. He confided his doubts to Finkelstein, the publicity man.

Finkie, too, was slightly embarrassed. "Seems like he shouldn't to have to quit school to pay his stadium pledge," said Finkie, "but you got to think of this, on the other hand—what a wow of a story it would make, Al. Al, can't you just see it in type—the supreme sacrifice and all that blah?"

Al became convinced. A week later Terry had a job as timekeeper on the south wing, and his picture in overalls appeared in the tabloid newspaper published by the publicity men. For a day or two he was a hero on a small scale; then McFee won the big game and Terry, like the frog in the well, dropped back into his accustomed oblivion. . . .

Until the big game nobody had been quite sure of McFee. Early in the season the rumor had spread to a hundred colleges that the State University had a dark horse in the offing, but since he was never seen in action he was soon overlooked. He was always one of the blanketed squad on the sidelines; and there were those who wondered if his reputation were not already a pricked bubble. But the State University won its first four games, so nobody cared.

On the day of the big game it was different. That marvellous forward pass which had won for the State University all the season—what good was it against the line-crushing machine of alien crimson jerseys which ploughed inexorably across the field? Four yards at a time—five yards—three yards—nothing could stop them; the State University seemed helpless. Its few forward passes were intercepted and the red march across the field began anew. 21 to 0 against the State University at the end of the first half, and seventy thousand people in the new stadium looked at each other blankly while the enemy band played mad hymns of triumph.

There was nothing human about those crimson jerseys; they advanced like the piston of an engine in short, mechanical gains. They never seemed to lose the ball. They never made a mistake. The State University had created a similar machine to execute the forward pass, but it was crushed.

At the beginning of the second half McFee replaced Kositzky at halfback. Seventy thousand people gave him a curious look as he backed toward his own goal while the other team prepared for the kickoff.

The epic has been told and rehashed in every sporting page in the country but it is still discussed whenever students gather round a fraternity house grate fire. . . . How McFee in his first moment as varsity player caught the kickoff and ran it back seventy-eight yards for a touchdown. How McFee tore loose eight minutes later for a fifty-yard run around end for another touchdown. How McFee alone completely demoralized the crimson machine and made four touchdowns in the last half for a State University victory!

Of course the great crowd went insane. And yet there was a curiously different note in the cheering that day, a note almost of pathos buried deep in the triumphant clamor, as if those seventy thousand people were sobbing out their gratitude because one man had freed himself from the earth. He did not crawl along on the ground,

this McFee, as other men crawled; he flew like a swallow. Red arms reached for him and fell heavily when he danced away and left them clutching nothing. He was lyrical of speed . . . his lightness had outwitted the machine.

He did not seem to belong to either team; he seemed to be running from both of them. In the midst of this game which had long since forgotten youth and freedom, McFee was youthful and free.

He was as great as Thorpe, the sporting pages said, as fast as Grange. From the one contest he received more adulation than most stars receive in a season. During the winter, it is true, there were doubters who wondered if McFee could repeat in his junior year, but they were silenced when the next season began. For McFee made run on run, touchdown on touchdown. Blasé sporting writers composed sentimental poems about him, comparing him to everything from a locomotive to an angel. Columnists discussed his breakfast food preferences. Editorial writers were aware of him. . . . Even the English Department, which has always been a bit severe with stars because of its espousal of intermural athletics, rallied shamelessly to McFee.

"That guy's so goddam famous," said Bill Lait in the A. O. G. house one night, "that he's annoyed if the university mail gets carelessly mixed in with his mash notes."

"So famous," Andy Protheroe added sulkily, "that the university can't get a letter any more unless it's sent care of McFee."

The new stadium, which shared with fourteen other stadiums the distinction of being biggest in the world, was not half big enough to hold the crowds which came to pay tribute to McFee.

And yet, as in that first game, there was always the note of hoarse, inarticulate pathos in the solid wall of sound which rose from the thousands in the steel and concrete stands. It may be that these people came to

cheer victory but made their applause a sacrament to McFee's triumph of youth over victory. It may be that they were sad in the midst of exultation because all other men were earth-bound creatures when compared with McFee. Or it may even be that their cheers were a chant of gratitude because one man in his fleetness had escaped the machines which men set up to trap themselves.

V

Visiting journalists who read in Finkie's copious publicity that McFee was an aspirant to Phi Beta Kappa honors logically concluded that he must be a particularly dumb and Neanderthalic sort of brute. Unfortunately, as it later proved, this was a mistake; McFee was a young man with a rather active and observant mind.

Of course he had never had time for study. He had been gently and tolerantly guided through the College of Commerce with passing marks, merely paying his instructors the flattery of attending classes. But all the time he had been learning things. Beneath his vanity and romanticism lay a hard vein of shrewdness; he had courage, too, and a supple intelligence.

Because he was a young egotist he never became conceited. He knew perfectly well that Wesley Grimes, the new halfback, was quite as valuable to the team, even though Grimes' dour, awkward, Cromwellian fervor did not win applause. He knew that Staley's superb (and unnoticed) interference often made possible a brilliant run, just as good old DeWitt's tackling also contributed to the McFee renown. He knew all these things and yet he accepted the cheers as his own due. These thousands of people had not paid several dollars each to see a football game—they had paid to see McFee. A man had become greater than the game . . . McFee, the egotist, simply accepted the fact that he was the man.

When the visiting journalists asked for the story of

his life he was not surprised. He answered their questions easily, and he evaded them as easily, which to a journalist is always a mark of foresight. He was still an extremely hard-headed young romanticist with a dream, and sometimes the dream lit his gray eyes and slightly freckled face when he took a turn as interviewer and asked a correspondent questions about Port Said or Korea or Tahiti.

As his last season on the team began, people wondered what would become of McFee. It would be particularly melancholy, people said, for a man like him to sink into obscurity after graduation. But no such thing happened —McFee quietly withdrew from the University after his final game. And the headlines in the newspapers proclaimed that he had signed a contract to play professional football two years at fifty thousand dollars a year.

The campus was stunned. In a world which started and ended with a diploma, here was a man who refused a diploma. In a world of amateur athletes, here was a man who had turned professional.

Finkie's publicity, which for three years had worshipped McFee, suddenly became vindictive. Al Robinson shook his head mournfully at a pep meeting and said, "I would never have believed it."

"McFee is still a young man," said old Professor Hebron, "and he has not yet learned that money is not everything. Youth is impatient and McFee has not seen fit to take the advice of those who have his best interests at heart."

Terry Hume, who had just resumed his sophomore courses after two years as the unknown soldier, was briefly resurrected—his great sacrifice was made the object lesson of an editorial commenting upon McFee's traitorism.

Coach Miles was always an outspoken man and he had only four terrible words for the newspaper correspondents who stormed his office.

"McFee," he said, "is a quitter."

VI

In a businesslike suite of a Detroit hotel McFee's new manager and publicity agent were holding a conference. On the table between them lay a huge stack of letters from the State University condemning the football star for turning professional.

"The damn hypocrites!" exploded McFee's manager, an astute gentleman of the sporting fraternity who also guided the destinies of several promising welterweights. "They got a nerve—they make all the jack they can outa my boy, then bawl him out because he's cleaning up, himself. They grab a few hundred grand every year at football," he sneered, "then howl their heads off about 'com*mer*- cialism'!"

"But what we going to do about these?" demanded McFee's publicity agent for the tenth time, pointing to the stack of letters.

There were letters from Coach Miles, from Al Robinson, from old Professor Hebron, from Dean Abrams. At least a hundred of them, all attacking McFee . . . sorrowful letters, bitter or angry or curt letters.

"We can't show 'em to him—him playing at Buffalo tomorrow and Baltimore Friday. It'd ruin the boy's game."

"What else can we do? He'll find out anyway."

"Oh, well!" McFee's manager brought his chair to the floor with a decisive bang and took a tighter grip on his cigar. Grimly he rapped at the door of the adjoining room where the football player was talking to representatives of travel bureaus. "Come here, Mac," he croaked hoarsely as he indicated the pile of letters.

The publicity agent mopped his brow. . . . The first letter McFee chose was the terse one from Coach Miles.

A puzzled, anxious look came over the youth's face as he finished it and began the regretful note from Professor Hebron. Then four closely written pages from

Terry Hume. . . . "You know, Lloyd, I've always had your best interests at heart ever since we sat across from each other in the Lark High School—and I *can't* believe you would bring disgrace on yourself and the old school this way——"

McFee stared out of the window a long time, his brows drawn. In an agony of suspense the manager and publicity man were half out of their chairs.

". . . I ask you, Lloyd, to remember those two years of sacrifice I made for the stadium . . ."

Hesitantly McFee pushed the pile of letters aside. He turned his head away.

"My God!" cried the manager. "Don't take it so hard, boy! Only a few letters——"

"Oh, the letters," said McFee absently. "Sure, go ahead and answer them yourselves. I can't be bothered now—I'm trying to decide whether to go to Sumatra this winter or Madagascar."

Eighth Episode:

THE BALMY OLD DUCK AND THE BUTTERFLY

From the Catalogue of the State University:

Grade A indicates work of an exceptionally high quality.

VIII: *The Balmy Old Duck and the Butterfly*

TO Andy's chosen school—the College of Commerce—the course had no conceivable relevance. He had elected it dreamily after glancing through the State University's announcement of courses, in search of a study which would yield him two credits in pay for minimum endeavor. He had wavered before Plant Design, also Native Birds: two subjects seeming to have a mysterious flavor with yet a mild harmlessness about them. But they were eight o'clocks, and Andy had no notion of invading the precincts of erudition at that ghastly hour.

The History of Early Art was flawless. It demanded no prerequisites, no laboratory, no field trips; it was described pleasantly in the catalog as "a *brief* survey of ancient art forms," and it promised lantern slides during which one could conveniently drowse at the somnolent, overfed period of two o'clock in the afternoon.

None of the dozen students who had for similar reasons entered the class felt quite appropriate beneath the devout, aesthetic gaze of Professor Bellamy. Obviously he assumed that all students were avid with interest, that they came to him like young crusaders hot on the trail of art's elusive chalice. Embarrassed and rather sheepish, they faced this tall, stooped, thin-cheeked man who fumbled vaguely with his notes, sorted his lantern slides and made slow, painstaking sketches on the blackboard, all in the childlike belief that their eager attention could not wander.

When the assistant in the back of the room began to throw stereopticon pictures upon the small screen, the class watched with amusement, snickering irrepressibly.

The pictures were vague representations of Egyptian gods, Sumerian stone carvings, and Assyrian warriors; the slides were old and cracked, too large for the screen or too small for clarity. Some of them were run upside down, but Professor Bellamy, with his back to the white sheet, blandly rambled on in his long, recondite descriptions.

As the svelte, smirking figure of an Egyptian hippopotamus goddess appeared, Andy Protheroe commented in a low voice, "The prehistoric flapper!" . . . After that it was the fashion in the history of art class to murmur flippant remarks as the cracked slides sent inaccurate images faltering across the dusty screen.

"Balmy old duck," said Andy to someone as they left the classroom.

Balmy Old Duck, Professor Bellamy at once became . . . and so he is still referred to, up to this day, at the State University. Andy's most casual remarks attained in such fashion to semi-official recognition.

One of the balmiest things the Old Duck did was to omit roll call. It took too much time from his lyrical descriptions of the bas-relief in the palace of Sargon the Second. He substituted a large, illuminated scroll on which he had written his students' names in variegated inks; he trustfully asked them to mark up their own attendance on this scroll when they entered the classroom. Unfortunately they were not sentimental. His trust seemed to them a happy and convenient avenue to cutting the class. It was so easy for one person to put marks beside the names of everybody absent. By the evidence of the scroll each student had attended each class period. It was a beautiful record—one of which Professor Bellamy was doubtless very proud.

Another curious thing he did was to invite the class weekly to his house for tea.

He had collections of early paintings, ancient pottery, frayed palimpsests, which he felt it would be educational for the students to view. Andy avoided these teas as long as possible. He was, perhaps, the busiest man on the campus, although he went about his innumerable activities with an air of laziness. Committees, dancing, cheer leading, dramatic criticism for the humorous magazine, fraternity and campus politics, the pursuit of women, the endeavor of keeping his clothes and his car immaculate! What leisure did he have for the minor and trivial occupations of cultivating instructors and attending classes?

It annoyed him mildly when the faculty tried to interfere with the real business of his college life. He regretted his inability to please the professors. But he felt, with a mental shrug, that they should be satisfied to educate those who had nothing better to do than be educated—the bone-rimmed, submerged tenth.

Yet Andy was courteous. Beneath his hardness Andy was hopelessly warm-hearted. When the Balmy Old Duck stopped him that day on the campus, peered into his face, and wistfully asked why he had failed to appear at the last tea, it was impossible for Andy to be other than gentle. He fell immediately into the role of a young man respecting his elder. And he dramatized his respect, saying *"Sir"* and ostentatiously holding his hat in his hand.

"I've planned on coming this afternoon, sir," he said with impulsiveness he regretted immediately afterward.

"Good! Good!" said the Professor, rubbing his hands together and beaming through his pince-nez. The black ribbon he wore attached to it seemed an amusing, child-like vanity. "I shall look for you then. Don't disappoint us." Playfully he held up one finger and gazed at Andy with such an expression of pleased confidence that Andy knew he would cut his afternoon pool to attend the wretched tea.

So, at the Professor's house an hour later, Andy found

himself seated precariously in a small drawing room—precariously because the small tables were crowded with valuable relics of the Professor's trips to Egypt and Mesopotamia—with a few of his classmates who were attempting to converse instead of talk. The Professor was trying to put them at their ease by relating an incident concerning Assurbanipal.

"You will remember," he remarked brightly to Andy, "He was called by the Greeks, *Sardanapalus.*"

Andy nodded. "Sardanapalus," he repeated with an air of profound corroboration.

As he spoke, the curtains parted and Andy looked straight into the eyes of a young woman. He always remembered these curtains—a faded, hand-wrought tapestry of bronze and saffron with threads of almond green weaving a pattern as intricate as a fantasy by Aubrey Beardsley. But the reason he remembered them had nothing to do with Aubrey Beardsley, of whom Andy had never heard.

It was that they made a background for her . . . it was that she stood a moment quite still against them and seemed at once a part and the meaning of their quiet luster.

Because she was not at all the kind of woman Andy had known or even imagined. She was perhaps thirty-four. There were faint blue shadows under her eyes and her face had a contour more individual than the round cheeks of twenty which Andy knew so well. Startling, too, to see long hair coiled again upon a woman's head. This was drawn sleekly away from her small ears into one sinuous knot, leaving her forehead and features without the illusion of shadows. But her dark, oval eyes with an exotic suggestion of upturned corners needed this freedom to dominate her face; in them was met such color and light and fancy as minstrels love to sing destroyed Ilium's topless towers.

Professor Bellamy spoke. . . . In stunned silence Andy stood with one hand against the mantelpiece.

"My wife," Professor Bellamy had said. As if no startling, incredible words had been spoken, as if she herself were not incredible and startling, she moved over to the tea table and being seated, with a smile allowed the five males to sink into their chairs.

II

As Andy took a teacup from her hand he intercepted her eyes; it might be, he felt, more exciting to meet her eyes than to meet another woman's lips. But her look was self-contained and absolutely inscrutable. He could no more read her eyes than he could have read a page —a word—of Greek.

She sat erect on the ottoman instead of gelatinously lolling in the co-ed fashion. She looked warmly, interestedly at the undergraduate faces as if they were a new and pleasant panorama of youth. Andy felt with a little pang that he was being included with the others. Fiercely he wanted her to know at once that he was different, more sophisticated, responsive to the subtleties of her face and manner. Yet he seemed hopelessly submerged in the group with no way to extricate himself.

"And with whom do you next play football—on Saturday?" she asked, choosing this safe topic. Her voice, very low and smooth with a satiny texture, held a strangeness of accent, but it was merely alien because it was excellently pronounced English—English that had traveled.

A sophomore started to answer and then he looked at Andy as if Andy were better equipped for a nice reply.

"Ohio," said Andy. He could think of nothing brilliant, witty or arresting to add and so he put on a moody air, desperately hoping this posture might win her attention.

"Do you know, I have never seen a football game!" she confessed.

"But you have seen Rugby and cricket and polo," said Andy, thinking that now she would give him a quick glance of appraisal.

She didn't. She nodded gravely. "But I'd rather see football. It sounds more exciting—more like a brawl of the streets."

The sophomore laughed loudly.

For some reason Andy glared at him with annoyance.

Professor Bellamy emerged from a reverie to resume the conversation exactly as if it had never wandered into such frivolous paths.

"Sargon's great-grandson, Assurbanipal," he said, "had at that time conquered lower Egypt and—let me see, what was it the Greeks called him—somehow it escapes me at this moment?"

Andy's memory was always facile. "Sardanapalus," he said quickly.

And now Mrs. Bellamy really looked at him with interest and surprise. As he left her drawing room he was still tingling warmly with the triumph of securing this solitary, hard won glance.

Andy, whose conquests were legion, whose defeats were few and trivial, was tingling warmly because of a single look of interest from a woman of thirty-four. . . .

And now he religiously attended his history of early art class at every period. He began to set down notes in the big, expensive leatherbound notebook which was guiltless of entries except the memoranda of his social engagements. The taking of notes was unlearned science to Andy and he bungled voluminously along in the wake of Bellamy's voice with impulsive abbreviations and uncanny spelling. His writing was cramped and illegible. His style of recording a lecture held a certain pitiable ineptness with its long dashes to indicate parts he didn't hear or understand:

"Balmy old D. said egyp. toomb paintings show decorative but stiff elaborate forms which—. Cuniform. (Cunieform?) Script prevailed for long Ages in near

east, babelonia and—. Stone age remains in Egy. are very uncer. dates, there are neolithis and Paleo—what the hell—remains there but not known—? Asserian warrior from bah-relief from palace Sargon the sec. showed on the Screen—showed old guy with knotty legs and shirt only coming to the knee—side view—he had bow and arrow it looked like, and enough whiskers to start an alfalfa ranch."

This remarkable endeavor was prompted by Andy's desire not to be dropped from the class; if he were dropped, his regular attendance at the weekly tea parties must terminate. And in spite of Bellamy's mild, halting manner in the lecture room, he was astonishingly severe and impatient in his quiz section. No doubt his belief in the students as eager and penetrating scholars caused him to feel surprised irritation when they stumbled and floundered. He had a way, too, of remarking casually, "You will be interested in dipping into the fascinating account of the pyramids given by Dr. Wallis Budge." Nobody having troubled to dip into the fascinating account, it was a bit disheartening to find all the questions of a written quiz based upon these outside authorities!

Now with Andy continually waiting after class to inquire about such references, the Balmy Old Duck was coming to regard him with a proud, affectionate eye. Not infrequently the Balmy Old Duck remarked in class:

"After you have all essayed your guesses on this point we shall have to ask Mr. Protheroe to enlighten us."

And Andy, in the empty back row, glancing hastily at a little card covered with scribbled data, enjoyed being for once the bright boy of the class, the scintillating star around which minor planets revolved. It was the first time in his long college career that he had met with such distinction.

His roommate, Bill Lait, was perplexed one Sunday night when Andy abandoned a game of stud poker to establish himself at the desk.

"Letter home?" said Bill, raising pale, cynical eyebrows.

"Study," said Andy tersely. He frowned and opened a drawer, gazing at its litter of playing cards, old dance programs, the broken end of a siphon, odd cuff links, corks, pipe cleaners and letters. "Isn't there a pencil in this hell-hole?" he grumbled.

"Use your pen," said Bill, yawning over the Sunday rotogravure section.

"Want a pencil," said Andy, pawing through the drawer.

"Whatcha gonna do with a pencil?" queried Bill suspiciously. "Wait! Wait! There's that red tie I have been looking for." He grabbed it from Andy's fingers.

"Don't bother me," said Andy, finding an indelible stub. "I'm going to make some tracings of bah-relief out of a book."

"You which?" muttered Bill.

"Didn't you ever hear of bah-relief, you moron?" inquired Andy superciliously. "It was the *dernier cri* of fashion in old Sargon's time; vulgarly speaking, it was the crocodile's sideburns. The best interior decorators used it—they smeared it all over the walls of Sargon's big billionaire palace. He was of the *nouveau riche,* I grant you, but he stepped right in and talked cold salad to the D. A. R.'s, F. F. V.'s and S. O. B.'s of the community. He introduced iron weapons, night clubs and bah-relief in Babylon and made them like it. His great-grandson, Assurbanipal, was maliciously nicknamed Sardanapalus by the wops and Greeks."

"Oh, bah on your bah-relief!" grunted Bill.

In disgust he watched Andy blow the thick dust from several books and bend in an exaggerated attitude of study over the desk. The room was very still. Andy gazed hard at a book. . . . The type blurred . . . he was thinking of Mrs. Bellamy's eyes. He frowned angrily each time Bill's paper crackled.

"No cigarettes in this joint?" said Andy at last in a querulous voice.

"I didn't know," said Bill, "that you highbrows ever used them."

III

Andy had gone five times to tea at the Professor's house and he had seen Mrs. Bellamy four times. It seemed to Andy that her voice was more personal when she addressed him now, that her eyes lingered on his face with more than detached appraisal. But he could not be sure. . . .

One night as he drove slowly across the campus on his way to a sorority where he had an engagement with Georgia Carewe, he saw the Balmy Old Duck entering the Natural History Building. There was a lecture in the Natural History Building—something about paleontology or Egyptology perhaps. Andy mused on the inexplicable impulse that could lead a man to attend such a lecture. And as he mused he found that the car, with inspiration very nearly its own, was swerving out of the avenue which led to the sorority house and approaching the quiet street where the Bellamys lived. Very cheeky of the car, Andy thought. But he humored it and let it roar along on its wilful way.

As he rang the bell he drew a deep breath and looked up at the sharp sickle moon above the snow-piled housetops. He jerked his muffler into place, pulled his hat to a more piratical angle. A puckery, nervous feeling made the back of his neck tingle. He had not known that sensation since he was a small boy going to his first girl party.

The old housekeeper opened the door, and as he shouted into her deaf ear with a sick feeling of intrusion, Mrs. Bellamy appeared in the hallway. She was white in an evening gown of black velvet and the jade of a short necklace was close about her throat.

Andy spoke some words rapidly. Words about wanting to see Professor Bellamy in regard to a reference book. . . . But all the time his eyes were entreating her to let him enter and merely sit beside her and touch her hand. He knew that if he had to go out again into the snow-covered streets he would feel anguish. And he was so frightened and cowardly before anguish! As terrified before pain as a child. Surely she would let him stay in here where it was bright and light from the candle of her loveliness. . . . His soft, dark eyes pleaded this way, while his voice said a little hoarsely that he must see Professor Bellamy about a reference book.

As if she were kindly answering both of his requests, she led him without a word into the drawing room. She was drinking her coffee there all alone before a smoldering grate fire. He watched her hands as she poured coffee for him into a Wedgwood cup. He said humbly that if she didn't mind he would wait for the Professor's return.

Then their eyes met and she smiled. Her eyes were merry tonight and took an illusory coloring of jade from the necklace about her throat.

"Now tell me," she said, "what was Assurbanipal called by the Greeks?"

"Sardanapalus," he said.

"But such a silly name!" she cried, beginning to laugh.

"Nobody," said Andy, "would call even a dog Sardanapalus."

"But *anything* was better than Assurbanipal!"

"Oh, if you look at it that way," said Andy, "it wasn't such a raw deal."

"Still," she insisted, "they must have been quite mad."

"They were," he agreed. "Crazy bozos—the Greeks."

Their eyes glittered with laughter, clung together in the sudden stillness of the room. The stately ramparts of classicism had crumpled before the sound of their derision. They felt triumphant.

"For ten years," she said, "I have known that the

Greeks called him—you know. But it never seemed funny until tonight."

"But have you heard," said Andy eagerly, "how old Sargon the Second strutted his stuff? He crashed the gates of Babylon you know—and it was no mean metropolis. From what I can gather it was a fast-stepping place—beside it New York or Paris would be small-time vaudeville."

She nodded. Her eyes gleamed at him from between dark lashes.

"He made it more racy and riotous with big roof gardens where wild lutes played syncopated melodies. And jazzy zithers and harps—sure. Old Sargon shot the whole works and he commanded the people of Babylon to dance and they did dance. And he strewed the walls of his palace lavishly with crazy designs in bah-relief . . . and all the dead ones in Babylon suddenly woke up and said, 'So this is life!' And they all started dancing and as far as I can make out, people have been dancing . . . and laughing ever since."

The blood pounded in his temples. He felt vague as if he had been drinking, and his voice sounded feverish and blurred to his own ears. She was so close to him . . . he knew no precedence, no guidance—no past experience could help him with this woman so different from any woman he had ever known or imagined. . . . And in her eyes such color and light and fancy as minstrels love to sing destroyed Ilium's topless towers. But Andy knew nothing of Ilium's topless towers—and for that reason his inarticulate response to her was woven the more of pain.

"You seem so fond of history," she murmured. Her hands were clasped loosely so that her rings shone splendidly all together.

"I'm not," said Andy wildly; "it's too parrot-like."

"Parrot-like?"

"Repeats itself, you know."

Now why had he made that idiotic crack? This was not the way he wanted to talk to her. He had meant to

say low, gentle things and meet her sophistication with lazy, ironic phrases. Instead he felt himself to be frightfully young and crass and collegiate. "Try me again," he begged. "I can think up a lot of good serious things to say if you give me time."

"You think I'm a serious person then?" Her forehead wrinkled in a little frown. "Why, I confess to you that all my life the planets have seemed less important to me than slipper buckles . . . and I am still hopelessly ignorant of what the world's solemnity is all about."

Again Andy's rhetoric leaped uncontrollably into the breach. "You can just about take it from me that solemnity is unmitigated bunk. A bunch of old guys with Dundreary whiskers got together ages ago and said, 'Now if we don't do something about it a lot of people are going to start enjoying themselves and that would be a damned shame!' And so they set up a bunch of universities and institutions and things and began teaching everybody to get solemn about such junk as salmon fisheries and unearned increment and iambic pentameter and amoebas and Hamlet and the chief exports of New Zealand and the shape of a grasshopper's hindlegs. But the joke of it is," he said with a quick glance at her, "that sometimes somebody like you or me fools 'em and goes all through life without getting excited because the earth is round."

"You think laughter has a way of persisting in spite of institutions?"

"But they'll soon be making laws against saxophones," he said mournfully.

"And beauty."

"God forbid! They would have to exile your eyes."

Her smile fluttered carelessly like the wings of a butterfly. He flushed and made a painstaking business of lighting a cigarette. He was afraid that he had spoken like a schoolboy. She was so wise and far from his reach. . . . Although if he had stretched out his hand he might have touched her.

In a moment he found himself getting up and saying abruptly that he must go. He had forgotten all about waiting for Professor Bellamy.

He drove around and around the cold, quiet streets trying to straighten out his emotions but they were a tangle of violent happiness and misery. And he wished desperately that he hadn't talked so much.

IV

At the next tea he behaved sulkily and would not look at her face, afraid that she would show her memory of what he had said about her eyes. But after it was all over and he had gone away he knew he could scarcely endure the week that must pass until he saw her again.

Life was very sly. Andy felt rebelliously that it had tripped him. In the Balmy Old Duck's class he was working feverishly so that he might once a week attend a tea where he would see Mrs. Bellamy. And then when he saw her he hated himself for being a callow ass and avoided looking at her face!

The semester was almost at an end before the thing happened. And he had known wretchedly through all his tangled happiness and pain that some day, before he could halt his words, it would happen.

. . . He had gone that Thursday afternoon to the Bellamy's house for tea as he had gone each Thursday afternoon before. But on entering the tiny drawing room he found Mrs. Bellamy alone; and he remembered that the Balmy Old Duck had made some vague announcement about the pleasant custom terminating with the semester.

Mrs. Bellamy was standing at the window looking languidly out at the garden where the dry barren stalks of vanished flowers swayed faintly in the December wind. She turned her face toward him and smiled . . . a certain smile of hers he often thought of as grave.

Again he felt that childlike dread of the anguish which

always came to him when he left this house, a helpless longing to be allowed to enter and stay at her side a little, where everything was warmed and brightened by her loveliness.

"Is Professor Bellamy at home?" he asked from force of habit. He took several long, lounging collegiate steps forward, on his lips a frozen, impersonal smile which had no meaning or sincerity; his rakishly handsome face was a mask with dark, effective eyes and romantically cynical mouth.

"Oh no," she said, still standing by the long, rather shabby crimson hangings of the window. "He's at his office correcting the examination papers—perhaps even at this minute he's wondering whether to give you a D or an E."

Andy's lips curled grimly. Damn it, the woman simply didn't know how he had worked—how he had slaved in order not to be dropped—in order to continue looking at her eyes, her hair, just once a week. But he heard himself speaking humbly, apologetically. "I'm sorry; I stupidly forgot that we weren't to come here any more on Thursdays."

All at once he was stunned by the realization that his course in the History of Early Art was over. The teas were over. He would not be coming here any more. He would not be seeing her any more. . . . Only the dull, perplexed pain would continue—the troublesome grieving which he could not explain or understand. He felt his determination to be suave and pleasantly courteous crumple, suddenly leaving him with rather weak knees and an annoying, lumpy throat.

"Mrs. Bellamy," he said. And there he stopped, looking at her despairingly as a drowning person looks at a rescuer.

"What is it?" (Behind her shoulder those dry stalks of vanished flowers swaying in the frozen wind.)

He went nearer and took her hand, and crushed it against his cheek. "I don't know what it is. . . . You

see I don't know, Mrs. Bellamy. I don't even know how to say it. . . . What I mean is that I'm in love with you—and all that old rot." He smiled uncertainly, crushing the hand tighter against his flushed face.

"Please! My rings!" she cried with a little wince of pain.

He frowned down at the rings. "Won't you take them off, then?"

"It won't be necessary, will it? You don't have to scrunch them all together quite so hard."

"Yes," he said, lifting dark, serious eyes. "I do have to. I do really have to, Mrs. Bellamy."

She smoothed a fold of the curtain into a little plait. Her voice was very gentle. "And as for being—in love with me, you had really better not."

"Of course," he said impatiently. "I know I had better not. I don't even want to be. It's uncomfortable. It hurts like hell."

"But it won't keep on—hurting very long (please don't scowl at me like that!) and love has a way of coming like a transient when we are young . . . and leaving the next day with a gay wave of the hand and hardly a thank-you for the shelter. . . . But when we are older—" she spoke as if to herself, "love is an unwelcome guest . . . a poor relative who stays on and on—eating our bread and warming himself at our fire—afraid of the cold and wind outside. . . ." Although she smiled, her lifted eyes were curiously flecked with bitterness.

He did not trouble to understand her words, but he understood completely the white texture of her throat where it was lightly shadowed by the warm curve of her chin.

"Don't talk to me like that!" he cried with the sulky wilfulness of a child. "I don't like it—it makes me feel so damned young."

"But you *are* 'damned young,'" she murmured, still smiling with that remote gentleness. "And that is the reason I——"

"Don't care?" he flung out fiercely.

She turned her face away to the stark, winter-ravaged garden. "—the reason you will forget all about this after you have danced and been very gay for a few evenings."

"But what if I don't forget?" he stubbornly demanded.

"Then I suppose you will come and tell me so."

His lips twisted with young cynicism at the corners. "Goodbye—until then."

"Goodbye." Suddenly she raised her head as if to add something. But her eyes rested on the cynical turn of his handsome mouth and she only said, "Yes . . . goodbye."

As he went out he felt freer and lighter than he had felt for weeks, while a chant of relief pounded at his disheveled mind: *"Well, I told her, I told her, anyhow! She knows now. She knows, I told her."*

V

The snug brilliance of a Christmas party.

Outside, the snow frosted to powdery gold by the moonlight. The brisk crunch of merry-makers' footsteps —the muffled lurch of cars, swift and careless interlopers through the white-drifted silence. . . . Inside, the mighty din of saxophone, piano, violin and cornet, and the swaggering thud of enormous drumsticks intimidating the feet into obedience to lawless rhythm. The ingenuous green of a Christmas tree decked with childish baubles, red and purple and blue and tinsel baubles, shuddering at the thud and pound of the vibrant jazz.

The dance was within the walls of one of the best sororities (*best* meaning best dressed and nationally blasé). The most notable among the dancers were Andy Protheroe and Georgia Carewe. They danced carelessly with a slight swagger in their movements. Their eyes now and then exchanged the amusing thought that they were both very notable. Georgia Carewe with her blonde

hair curling out like the petals of a jonquil, was a princess of hearts in her own right and she had slight need of Andy Protheroe's ultimate capitulation. For that reason she danced carelessly and paid no particular attention to his eyes. For that reason Andy Protheroe respected her immensely.

In a lull of the music they went close to the tree, captured like barbaric children by the color and gleam of its gold and crimson trinkets. "Byzantine colors," said Andy.

"Oh, what a highbrow! It's true what Bill Lait said. He said you were 'cracking books every night and swigging faculty tea every day.' He nearly cried. You're breaking his heart."

"Yes," said Andy with satisfaction, "sure, I'm a cultured guy. The Balmy old Duck thinks I'm a wow. I got two whole credits in the History of Early Art for merely learning that Assurbanipal was called Sardanapalus by the Greeks."

Her face took on a thoughtful, creative look. She sang softly,

Assurbanipal
Was a cannibal
Just a great big desert sheik—

Andy was pained. "He was an Assyrian, you little idiot. At least I think he was an Assyrian. Anyhow, you'd better show me the number of your poetic license."

She shook her flippant yellow curls impatiently. "Please shut up, this is going to be good—

Assurbanipal
Was a cannibal,
One of those wild desert sheiks—

What rhymes with *Sardanapalus?*"

"*Populace,*" said Andy, "of course."

She looked triumphant.

"But the populace
Cried, 'Sardanapalus!'
Served him right for playing around with the Greeks!

Isn't it clever? You can use it in your column in *The Lame Duck."*

With admiration Andy reflected on it. "The meter seems a bit generous in the last line," he said cautiously.

"It's free verse. Don't be dumb, dear. *Don't be dumb, dear!* What a peach of a title for a popular song. Don't you think I'm clever tonight? Don't you think I'm just bursting with brilliance?" She pirouetted slowly, admiring her own coral and silver image in the dark glass of the door.

The door opened at that moment and a new group of people came in. Young Mr. Bowden and Miss Griffith, of the Department of English. Chaperons. Dull, dark coats and polite coiffures. Restrained smiles. Professor Fannicott. Professor Bellamy. Mrs. Bellamy. . . .

A light scattering of snow shone on her bare head and the gray fur cloak she held loosely about her. Her eyes were black and exotic and aloof above the high color whipped into her cheeks by the cold wind.

As she moved across the room Andy watched her from behind Georgia's small, tilted head. At the first unexpected sight of her face he had felt a brief sensation of tumult and pain. But his thoughts immediately dulled into flat, resentful indifference. She had said he was "damned young"—had said he would immediately forget her! Well, he was going to do just that, and it was probably a good thing. She was one of those butterflies —a black velvet butterfly—that amuse themselves by flitting heartlessly just out of reach.

"Stunning, isn't she?" whispered Georgia at his elbow.

He looked down at her shining youthful head.

"Served him bally well right for playing around with the Greeks," he muttered irrelevantly. "Let's dance, shall we?"

But Georgia said with an air of highmindedness that they must first speak to the chaperons. "And with that somber charity accomplished," she said, "we can devote the rest of our evening to Vice or Refreshments."

They went into the library where the chaperons, now relieved of their wraps, were sitting in a circle looking pleasant as if something enjoyable were going to happen. At twelve o'clock they would all go home, still desperately looking pleasant as if something enjoyable had happened.

It suddenly struck Andy that Mrs. Bellamy was a chaperon. However exotic, however youthful, however alluring, she was nevertheless at this moment a chaperon. . . . A wide gulf seemed to open impassably between them.

The Balmy Old Duck smiled warmly at Andy as Andy took his hand and called him Sir. In a filial way Andy felt rather fond of this hoary pedagogue. If anybody had pointed out that Bellamy's hair was gray only at the temples, and his age a scant forty, Andy would have felt mild surprise and gone on thinking of him as a hoary pedagogue. His barbaric world was untroubled by nice distinctions. . . . The barbaric music in the next room began, and Georgia Carewe lifted her young, barbaric head as if she had heard the insistent call of a far-away jungle clan—the primitive, untutored call of drums, the powerful call of ancient rhythms, the call of youth to youth, the call of the dance.

Andy also raised his head with an involuntary little jerk. He had just taken Mrs. Bellamy's hand.

"I wish you would come and dance," he said, but all the time he was remembering Georgia Carewe's careless swaying and lilting in his arms.

Mrs. Bellamy was beautiful this night—splendid and unattainable in her saffron gown as a precious stone ambient with light. She shook her head, smiling, and Andy tried to look properly regretful as he turned away with Georgia Carewe.

"I feel awfully undergraduate," he whispered to Georgia's small, amusing ear. Vaguely he knew that an undergraduate is a person frightened by beauty and enraptured by careless swaying. . . .

"Me, too," she said. "Why did you hold Mrs. Bellamy's hand so long?"

"Because," said Andy lightly, "her husband gave me an A in History of Early Art. How I happened to get that A," he mused, "is another story. . . . However, it must be said that it is the only A, the grand and solitary A of my prolonged campus career." He sighed. "I suppose I shall never get another."

"Another!" gasped Georgia Carewe. "Why, you could never stagger around under the weight of two of them!"

"I suppose not," murmured Andy solemnly. "I suppose I should grow fat and pompous. Uneasy lies the vest that wears a Phi Bete key—and all that old rot."

The candles were lighted on the Christmas tree now. The chaperons stood in the doorway to look at the phantasmagoric scene of fleeting color and rhythmic movement . . . crimson and green and tinsel baubles shuddering at the thud and pound of the vibrant jazz . . . flickering candlelight . . . absurd laughter—and all the gay sounds that are born when youth tramples sobriety underfoot while music makes carnival.

And Mrs. Bellamy stood in the doorway and looked on. One pair of barbaric children was more beautiful and light-hearted and notable than all the rest. As they danced near the tree with its lighted candles and tinsel ornaments they lifted delighted eyes to the color and shine of it.

But at that moment Mrs. Bellamy drew back into the empty and darkened library where nobody could see that her eyes were full of tears. . . . It was said that Andy Protheroe had a way with women. Sometimes he knew it. But this time all he knew was that he had received the splendid and solitary A of his college career.

Ninth Episode:
DIOGENES DISCOVERS ANDY

From the Catalogue of the State University:

> *The courses of study offered by the undergraduate colleges extend regularly over a period of four years.*

IX: *Diogenes Discovers Andy*

THE university year was drawing to its dreary and tedious close. Over the campus the relentless net of finals had been thrown, and inside its meshes squirmed the fit and the unfit in a new and involuntary collegiate democracy. Men and women who had attained brilliant social supremacy sat side by side with the mediocre and unknown. For a few days the relentless examiner had leveled all classes. Caste was not. The high-hats desperately implored help from the highbrows . . . and got it. The highbrows weakly imparted the information they had been storing up where moth does not corrupt; the high-hats snatched it and wrote it down in the pink books. But without gratitude. For next fall they would keep these same highbrows from wearing Greek pins because they were grinds.

For years Andy Protheroe had been tottering on the brink of graduation, yet in June the University always found him unfit. Almost, it had become a habit with the University.

But this June a strange thing happened. With no preparation, with no hope as to the outcome, Andy had written three examinations and found to his amazement that he had idly, almost absently passed them. Returning to the A. O. G. house one afternoon after writing his fourth final, Andy knew beyond doubt that he had passed it, too, and the realization left a curiously unpleasant sensation in the pit of his stomach, which he could not analyze or explain.

As he neared his fraternity he saw a dusty old car in front of it—a family style of car burdened with ancient suitcases and bundles, such a car as did not frequently find courage to park near the A. O. G. portico. Andy frowned. He glanced coldly at the three rather disheveled children who sat in the front seat staring with undisguised wonder at his very wide and fashionably flapping trousers.

And now a man who loitered uncertainly between the car and the A. O. G. hedge came forward with outstretched hand to meet Andy.

"Derby's my name," said the man with a hopeful smile.

"Derby?" said Andy, unenlightened but accepting the calloused hand.

"None of the brothers were in," said the stranger, still smiling with a wistful attempt at joviality. "But I thought some of you would show up soon, so I waited."

"Quite right," said Andy. Furtively he darted a glance at the pilgrim's vest and there on the unpressed folds clung a heavily jeweled A. O. G. pin. The name Derby suddenly took on meaning. "My God!" thought Andy.

Far back in the paleolithic age of corduroy and crochet, literary societies, high shoes and long skirts, there had towered a heroic figure . . . Skid Derby . . . still unforgotten in the annals of the campus and still clothed with historical splendor. A man who made All-American and could also play the banjo alluringly. A man who was a wow in blackface and could nevertheless pass a reception line without stumbling. A man who broke shot putting records, sang like Caruso, made violent love, stuffed ballot boxes, and in all such versatile manners swaggered his way in and out of college, leaving behind a tradition and a legend. And after he was gone the nickname "Skid" had been bestowed on every freshman who happened to be called Derby, not as an honor to the

freshman but to keep alive a great nickname and a great memory.

This, then, was Skid Derby twelve years after. This eager, dusty, unpressed fellow, driving a family car with its impedimenta of children and suitcases . . . this uncertain, unwelcomed chap looking too broad and bulky for his height, wearing a stiff collar and unfortunate emblems in his lapel! The tragedy of it smote Andy, and he said to himself with sad conviction, "This man should never have come back."

Andy gripped the calloused hand again with heartiness and warmth. "I've heard about you all my life," he said. Skid Derby flushed, for his heart would have broken if nobody had said these words.

"What are you doing now?" said Andy with cleverly feigned deference.

"Lumber salesman," said Derby. "Everything going fine—couldn't be better." But there was a defensive note in his voice. "We drove from Rising City. Wife and kiddies right there in the car. You must meet them."

Andy met them. Mrs. Derby in a wrinkled linen suit sat in the tonneau holding a baby. The other little Derbys squirmed and giggled in sudden bashfulness at Andy's greeting. One needed a handkerchief badly, and after a moment's confusion Andy proffered his.

Then Mrs. Derby, with a look of eagerness and pride on her rather pretty, tired face, said, "Ann Mary Lane is my sister. Of course, you know Ann Mary—?"

Courteous gentleman that he was, Andy could find no way to claim her acquaintance. He admitted with a touch of regret in his voice that he did not know her—but without confessing that he had never even heard of her.

"Now isn't that funny!" said Mrs. Derby.

And Derby looked pityingly at Andy as if not knowing Ann Mary Lane stamped him as a nobody, a poor mediocrity. Naturally Andy was annoyed.

For the name of Andy Protheroe had the aura of greatness about it. It was one of those names you needed

merely to utter in order to get free tickets to anything on the campus (except a Y. M. C. A. lecture or a Woman's League dance). Even his enemies were vain of being seen talking to him on the street. Perhaps the instructors who deplored him were a trifle flattered when, with a careless gesture, he registered for their classes, and certainly they found flunking Andy a stimulating classroom sport. It was worth the bother of having him in class to hear him protesting in persuasive polysyllables against the adamant zeros. And when he found they were really adamant, his smile was of such invariable courtesy, his farewells so gentle and ironic!

But, of course, he could hardly explain all this to the Derbys. They would just have to find it out for themselves.

"I'll tell you what," said Derby briskly. "We're all going to meet her now. You get in the car and come along."

Hang their impossible relatives, thought Andy. He said: "So sorry! I was just going to the library."

He was going to meet Phoebe Fairlie and he knew uneasily that he was ten minutes late now.

"Oh, lovely!" said Mrs. Derby, opening the door of the car for him. "That's where Ann Mary is waiting for us—at the door of the library."

Because Andy had just taken an examination his mind was so dulled and threadbare that he was incapable of inventing a new objection. With grim heroism he climbed into the back of the car beside Mrs. Derby, and when the baby reached over and grabbed his new striped cravat he did not wince, but said in silky accents, "Bright little fellow, isn't he?" For Andy was like that. . . .

II

On the top step leading to the library sat the youngest youngster that could have called herself a co-ed. She

had such bright, wide eyes, such soft, childlike hands that Andy, looking at her, felt a despondent tug at his heart—a feeling of age and weariness and disillusion. Her hair falling in short, copper ringlets above the downy nape of her neck allured his fingers irresistibly, and he longed to trace the delicate outline of her flushed cheeks and parted lips. Ann Mary Lane. . . . And he had not known her . . . had never even heard of her.

As the overburdened car stopped by the library Ann Mary stood up, smiled a dewy, radiant smile and said, "Gee, what a load!"

There was nothing self-conscious or demure about her. She came bounding down the steps with the natural, unpremeditated scamper of a boy.

Andy's despondent fear that he was too weary and experienced gave way to a feeling of assurance. After all he was Andy Protheroe—and once she heard his name she could scarcely help responding to it!

As he was introduced he gave her a gently ironic look as if to deplore his own power; as if to say: "Please ignore all these things you have heard about me. They are really neither here nor there." To his surprise there was no answering recognition on her face, and he realized half in chagrin, half in amusement, that for once he was merely an unknown senior.

With interest he listened to Ann Mary chattering to her sister. Ann Mary chattered breathlessly, the phrases strung along in swift cargoes with funny gasps between. She was obviously a freshman, excited and pleased with university life.

"And Laura, listen! You know that chemistry exam that I wrote you about? Well, I passed it, but oh, it *was* awful, it was perfectly *nasty!* They asked for millions of formulas and equations and things, you can't imagine. . . . What *is* the formula for hydrochloric acid?" she asked Andy suddenly.

"Got me," said Andy, refusing to poke his mind into

that dismal abyss of science forgotten with his freshman year.

"Well, I should think you *would* know," said Ann Mary sternly. She turned back to her sister who glowed with undisguised adoration. "And Laura, that rhet prof I thought was such a beast liked my semester theme. . . . Oh, yes, and the man that sits back of me in rhet asked me to a dance Friday night and I'm going to wear that pansy dress Mom sent me . . . only I'm going to shorten it—I shortened all of them; you see the girls down here are wearing *very* short skirts.

"Then there's the band concert tonight, but he didn't ask me to that," said Ann Mary with engaging frankness. "I can't see why he didn't either, because it doesn't cost anything. Are you going to it? I wish I could go to it because I haven't got any more finals to cram for."

"Afraid we can't," said Laura. "We're all so tired, and then there are the children—"

"Will you go with me?" said Andy, finding it strangely difficult to sound easy and casual.

And Ann Mary said yes, that she would love to, and she became suddenly shy, catching her breath a little and gazing off across the green campus away from his intent eyes.

It was when he left her and strolled on into the library that he began to see what a wretched trick chance had played him.

"Damn the luck," he muttered to himself, his hands clenched inside his pockets. With an indifferent glance he saw that Phoebe Fairlie had not waited for him, and he was glad. Phoebe was all right. Lovely girl and all that. Popular. Clever. But he had forgotten there were girls like Ann Mary Lane . . . or perhaps he had never known it. She was different—so adorable that it hurt him to think about her. He almost wished that he had not seen her, for it made him miserable somehow to remember her soft little hands, her slightness and breath-

less voice. So new and young and fresh . . . coming in just as he was going out.

He sat down in the deserted magazine room and stared gloomily at the littered table. He had passed four examinations, and if he passed economics tomorrow he would graduate this June.

He would graduate at last. He was approaching what had been the ostensible goal of his six and a half years at college. . . . Andy shuddered. Now he understood why he had felt that unpleasant, inexplicable sensation when he came from his final this afternoon. He didn't want to graduate—why should he? *College was his profession!*

Once he ceased to be an undergraduate his life would end instead of begin. He could visualize the whole dreary prospect: business with his father, the cold world of realities, the necessity of being mature and responsible, moving about among people who would not know him as a scintillant campus star.

Skid Derby! See what had happened to him and how ludicrous and pitiful was his homecoming.

"That's what I'll be," said Andy between his teeth. "Another Skid Derby." He thought of himself as an exile from the campus he had conquered, able never to return to it except in the unhonored role of an old grad or a postgraduate. In an ancient car . . . the wife and kiddies in the back seat . . . out-of-date clothes . . . hesitant even before his own fraternity house.

"Good Lord!" he whispered. "Good Lord!"

Absently he had been riffling the pages of a small book that lay on the table and now, although he had no understanding or appreciation of verse, several mournful lines caught his eyes and held them.

Little lady of my heart!
Just a little longer,
I may love thee: we will part
Ere my love grow stronger.

Soon thou leavest fairyland;
Darker grow thy tresses:
Soon no more of hand in hand;
Soon no more caresses.

Wearily he closed the book, and his thoughts began again to turn around in a dull circle. Next year that adorable, laughing child would be back as a sophomore . . . his enemies would be making love to her. Next year she would be even more charming; next year she would be dancing, dancing, and her laughter would ring out clear and joyous beneath the glitter of stars . . . there would be music and gay lights and Ann Mary next year. And he would be gone. *Little lady of my heart! just a little longer. . . .*

Abruptly he rose and strode out of the library, but the monotonous refrain sang in his ears until it seemed that his very footsteps were measured to the beat of it.

III

That evening as he parked his long, blue-green roadster in front of Ann Mary's rooming house he felt a snobbish dislike of the place—an ugly, maroon-shingled bungalow with a pyramid of speckled begonia plants in the bay window and a few peonies by the porch. It was so long since he had called for a girl at any but the most assured of national sororities. . . . Ann Mary seemed surprisingly lovely when she appeared in the doorway—he had forgotten that she was such a darling. He liked the little look of appreciation that she gave his glamorous car and the grave care with which she established herself in it.

"Where to?" said Andy, his hands restless on the wheel. "The night is young. We have youth, energy and ambition. Shall we go to Peru?"

"What do I say now?" she inquired, looking up into his lazily handsome face with its narrowed eyes and slender blond mustache.

"You might say—" said Andy, driving slowly down the tree-shadowed street, "you might say, 'No, let's stay home and take a correspondence course.' Or again, you might say, 'Do they have prohibition in Peru?' But that's not so brilliant. Neither do I commend a joke about Peru and Peruna. No, on the whole, we had better change the subject. No conversation is interesting unless it is personal or immoral."

"All right then," said Ann Mary, clasping her hands tightly around her knee. "I want to know something: Are you a tea hound, a snake, a necker, a cake-eater and politician?"

"Is that all?" groaned Andy.

"That's all," said Ann Mary. "And are you?"

"I'm afraid so," said Andy meekly. "Who told you?"

"The girls in my house. And they said—they said you wouldn't take me out unless you thought I was snappy. Do you think I am snappy?"

"God forbid," said Andy piously.

"Oh," she said with disappointment. "Then you aren't going to kiss me?"

"Never," said Andy. "What an absurd notion." He smiled to himself, and out of the corner of his eye he watched her sitting very straight in the seat, staring dejectedly down at her hands.

"Well, then," she said with resignation, "we might as well go on to the band concert."

"Good music," said Andy sententiously, "inspires and soothes the soul. It does for the savage breast what a gin rickey does for the bulk of mankind. How many men could commit a murder while listening to a brass band play *Hearts and Flowers?*" he demanded, stepping on the gas and sending the car down a long stretch of white country road. "How many flappers," he shouted above the roar of the engine, "could hammer their suit-

ors to death while a saxophone executed *Marche Funebre?* How many—"

"Oh, shut up," said a small, sulky voice at his side.

He let the car glide easily to a stop beneath a great willow whose foliage made a lacy pattern of silver against the brooding moon. It was very still . . . and there was the faint odor of rich fields, of fading wild roses and pungent mint.

There was also the blithe sweet perfume that Ann Mary wore . . . and the tender outline of her young cheek near his shoulder.

He slowly lit a cigarette and the whisper of those gently grieving words began again in his thoughts, *"Little lady of my heart, just a little longer—"*

Year in and year out he had juggled the shining ball of love without troubling to catch it and hold it securely in his hands. And now when he wanted to grasp it close and sure beyond escape he found himself fumbling and afraid. There were so few days left to him before his inevitable departure. He felt wretched and haunted by the specter of his own graduation.

"You see," he began in a low voice, "I'll be going away in a little while, Ann Mary. And you'll be here . . . and there'll be so many men to dance with you, make love to you. It isn't as if I were coming back next year. It isn't as if you were the sort of a girl who could remain true to a memory—and all that old rot. And anyway, no man wants to be remembered by a girl who has no reason to forget him. (Not a bad aphorism, what?) So that's why I'm not going to tell you how I feel about you. That's why I'm not even going to kiss you. . . ."

Then fiercely and tenderly he kissed her.

IV

At three o'clock the next afternoon, Room 206 of Randall Hall was occupied by a handful of reluctant young

crusaders all armed with fountain pens and nervously prepared to do battle with the dragon of Economics 15.

An air of morbidity pervaded the room. Like soldiers they knew they were entering a struggle in which some of their number must perish.

Standing by the desk, idly fingering the pink examination books and the mimeographed question sheets, Professor Rutenber had a manner of frivolity, almost skittishness. It was his time of triumph. For a long semester he had helplessly endured indifference, thickheadedness and wanton neglect from his class; on this day he was august and clothed in divine right. The students who gazed piteously at him were wishing now that they had taken him and his knowledge more seriously. As if to mock their anxious foreboding, Professor Rutenber's round, ruddy face wore a mischievous smile.

He was a German, and like many of his countrymen he was rudely scientific in his abstract theories, romantic in his personal relations and sentimental in regard to home, country, virtue in women and honor in men.

Before distributing the question sheets he lengthened the period of painful anticipation by telling several little jokes at which nobody was carefree enough to laugh.

Just as the ten-minute bell sounded, Andy Protheroe came in. He closed the door meticulously behind him and made a slight, cynical bow to Rutenber.

"So, Mr. Protheroe!" said the professor, guardedly contemptuous. He disliked Andy's laziness and impudence and hoped to be rid of him next year. "You are late even at the great Judgment Day."

"I was taking a shower," said Andy, choosing a seat by the window. "Procrastination is the thief of grime."

"Not so good," said Rutenber.

"Best I could do," said Andy.

"Well, here is a little present for you," said Rutenber, handing him a mimeographed sheet and an examination book.

"Not so good," said Andy, looking at the questions.

"Best I could do," said the professor grimly.

In order to have the last word he became aloof and dignified, brooking no further frivolity at the expense of his final. "And now good day, young ladies and gentlemen," he said as he went out.

They were left alone with their wits and the honor system.

"Oh Lord," said a voice in the front row, "it isn't even based on the text book."

"What's 'single tax'?" asked somebody else.

"What a bachelor pays," said Andy.

"What's unearned increment?"

"What the gold-digger gets," said Andy. "Ask me another."

"Key down!" growled an irritable voice.

A silence fell. Andy yawned and shook his fountain pen, spattering green ink on the floor.

He ran his eyes over the blurred, mimeographed sheet: *Unearned increment . . . make a graph showing . . . state Gulick's law . . . single tax . . . Malthusian theory—*

They were all questions that he could almost have answered in his sleep.

He had never consciously tried to absorb any knowledge in the university. He had never had time for such a minor activity. But year after year he had attended classes, written examinations, flunked, been reinstated, and taken more examinations in an endless cycle of passive education. Now, as in the other finals he had taken that spring, he found that his subconscious mind had played him false and retained the wisdom that he sought so desperately to shun. It seemed that knowledge was a contagious germ, and if you were exposed to its virile poison too long your resistance became weakened and you contracted intelligence in spite of yourself.

He poised his fountain pen a moment over the sickly pink examination book. Wearily he inscribed the old legend on the cover:

"Andrew F. Protheroe
Economics 15, Section B
I have neither given nor received help . . ."

He paused and stared out of the window at a lightly fluttering poplar. With disgust and rebellion he imagined himself stalking the campus in the horrible cap and gown worn by candidates for graduation. He could picture the lank folds of the funereal gown falling about his legs, the absurd tassel of the cap tickling his neck . . . himself pattering obediently across the auditorium platform to receive his diploma from a red-faced, perspiring prexy —the whispers of the throng below: "There goes old Andy" . . . "Got his mutton-skin at last" . . . "Took him seven years, or was it eight?" . . . "Well, that's the end of him."

And after that the dark . . . with all the sadness of farewell and moaning at the bar . . . goodbye to the adorable child with copper curls . . . a monotonous business life with no more adulation and collegiate hand clapping . . . the dangerous trap of respectability that had caught Skid Derby . . . hopefully coming back like Skid Derby without realizing what had happened.

Deliberately and gently Andy screwed the cap on his pen, rose, and placed the empty book on the desk in the front of the room.

He went out to the bright campus, aflame with the June sunshine, fragrant with yellow roses, gay with the flash of cars and the color of women's dresses. His heart had never felt so light. Next year he would return jubilantly, nonchalantly to his little world! Already he was laying plans for the subjugation of his enemies and the strengthening of his own supremacy as dictator.

That evening he took Phoebe Fairlie to the post-exam dance in the gymnasium. It was his dance, practically, for he had headed the committee, ordered the punch, hired the jazz orchestra and would receive most of the revenue.

"Good old Andy," he said to himself as he perceived the excellence of the music, the perfection of the floor.

Ann Mary was there, wearing the pansy dress she had shortened with joyful recklessness, dancing with the sleek-haired youth who had discovered her in rhetoric. The orchestra was playing *Me and The Boy Friend,* a wistful melody of shop girl love and tawdry tinsel romance. Ann Mary tilted lightly as a flower, her head slightly back, her eyes bright as candle flame while the copper curls tossed in a grave rhythm against her cheeks.

She did not quite know how it happened that she found herself outside with Andy between dances . . . something about Phoebe Fairlie going to the dressing room for her lipstick . . . the sleek-haired youth patiently waiting, as Andy had directed him, in the long queue in front of the punch bowl.

"We'll sit in my car," said Andy, bundling her in. "He's going to bring the punch to us out here."

"But how can he find the right car?" said Ann Mary.

"He can't," said Andy feelingly. "Poor devil! Isn't it queer I never thought of that? Gotta go right back, of course." In the darkness of the car he groped for her warm, soft hand. "Come, Ann Mary, gotta go back."

She gave a quick sigh. "But I don't want to go back. . . ."

He smoothed her hair a moment and then with one finger traced the amusing outline of her small nose.

"I wish I could have your nose to keep, Ann Mary."

"For a Commencement present?"

"I'm not going to graduate."

As he said the words he felt borne upward on a high wave of exhilaration. He caught her close against him, but not roughly, for he had an exquisite sense of her precious softness and youngness—as if her youth were something frail that could break at his touch. But as he kissed her, she seemed suddenly strong and warm, with brave, adventurous lips eager for life.

"I'm coming back next year!" he whispered against

the curls about her ear. "Ann Mary! Do you want me to come back?"

The music was beginning . . . it seemed far away, deliciously syncopated, slow and fantastic with the dull thud of drums and the tangled discord of saxophones in a sea of darkness while the dancers whirled past the lighted windows beyond, as glamorous and distant as strange puppets.

"I'm coming back—and it means that I'll be near you. That I'll be dancing with you, making love to you." He was making love to her now with his voice, speaking gently, caressingly, and low. "I'm coming back—and it means that you won't be lost, far off, away from me . . . but close, close, close, Ann Mary? Are you glad?"

Suddenly in the midst of those tensely controlled words his voice broke and ended on a husky note—like a small, uncertain boy he buried his head against her, wondering why speech failed him, why he was bewildered and almost tremulous. Then Ann Mary put her young arm tenderly, protectively about him and said that funny, solemn thing that he always remembered. "I am so awfully glad, child," said Ann Mary.

V

Without curiosity, prompted merely by a careless adherence to form, Andy Protheroe strolled up to the door of Room 206, Randall Hall, the next Monday to view the card that would be posted there. On this card, so portentous to the rest of the students in the Economics 15 class, would be printed a neat list of the seat numbers and opposite each number a plus or minus sign to indicate a passing or flunking grade.

Professor Rutenber always made out his list with very tiny numbers and huge plus or minus signs in red ink with a carefully ruled border of double lines.

Andy was leisurely approaching the door when he halted as if stunned and stared fixedly at the card.

Then he began turning his head from side to side and squinting his eyes as if he were taking an oculist's test. But there was unaccountably and tragically a plus after his seat number.

Andy went up to the list and put his finger under the plus sign but it did not disappear. "One highball couldn't have done this to me," he muttered to himself.

A moment he stood in confused thought, then he dashed out of the door, jumped into his roadster parked at the curb and drove to the Faculty Club, where Rutenber had a room. Here he learned that the professor had left only five minutes before for the railroad station.

Andy disappeared as suddenly as he had entered, and it was only a moment before his car was tearing with all the enthusiasm of its high-powered price along the somnolent streets that led to the station.

Professor Rutenber, wearing a white Panama hat and a new tweed suit, stood by the railroad track, suitcase in hand.

He was impatiently awaiting the train that would bear him away from the desiccated erudition of the declining term to the cool, fresh hills of Vermont. In order to leave on his trip so early he had made great haste correcting his examination books. Some of them he had not even opened—those written by the most diligent . . . and those written by students taking the course a second time who must have acquired a modicum of knowledge at last.

But what was this? Andy Protheroe hurrying up the platform with a look of anxiety on his lazily handsome face! What new impudence could the fellow be up to? The professor stirred uneasily but remembered with satisfaction that he was forever rid of Andy as a student.

Before speaking, Andy paused a moment to straighten his tie and light a cigarette.

"Professor Rutenber, I cannot allow you to leave with-

out correcting a very serious mistake which has occurred."

"But I gave you a plus!" said the professor, gesticulating petulantly. "So. What more of me do you want? A plus plus? That is absurd. There is no occasion for oratory or argument or high-flown language." He was growing red and excited, trying to protect himself from the flood of persuasion he felt imminent. "The matter is ended, Mr. Protheroe. We need not discuss it. I congratulate you on your graduation. Good luck. Goodbye. . . . What more can be said?"

Andy smiled the sad, deprecating smile of a misunderstood man. "The correction of such a mistake," he said with dignity, "is not a pleasant duty. But I must tell you, sir, that I handed in an empty book and you have posted a passing mark for me."

Professor Rutenber stared at him silently. His face grew even redder. He opened his mouth and then shut it again.

"You mention my graduation," said Andy disconsolately. "I realize that the losing of these three credits prevents me from getting my degree this year. I needn't tell you what my failure means to me. . . . But next year I mean to apply myself to college life and all that college means. And of course, sir," he added courteously, "I shall register for your course again in the fall." He flicked the ashes from his cigarette and stared soberly down at the platform.

The professor swallowed hard. "That is splendid," he replied hoarsely. "But the mistake! It was most stupid of me to mix the grades in such a way! I apologize—I am perhaps a bit near-sighted." He swallowed again and said clumsily, "I appreciate your setting it right, Mr. Protheroe. I respect your honor." He held out his large, plump hand.

Andy grasped it warmly. "I couldn't," he said, "allow you to pass me—I am only too glad I corrected the error in time." He smiled with both wistfulness and nobility

in his bright, candid face. "I shouldn't like, sir, to graduate under false colors."

The train had come in now, and Andy with his meticulous politeness carried the professor's bag over and saw him aboard it.

In the parlor car Professor Rutenber found his friend, Professor Gabler, already established, and the good German economist sank rather limply into the seat opposite. He was still touched and amazed by the incident.

"A most strange thing has happened," he said, wiping his brow. "The integrity of human nature continually surprises one, is it not so? I have just discovered a streak of unguessed honor in a student who is—a scholastic black sheep."

Reflectively he polished his glasses. "My faith in mankind has been renewed. . . . But for his own correction of an error he would have graduated!"

As the train rolled out of the station he looked through the window and caught a last glimpse of Andy Protheroe climbing into the blue-green roadster.

Andy leaned back wearily in the seat a moment, for he, too, had been moved and shaken by the incident.

"I would have graduated," he murmured to himself. "Foiled again, old Alma Mater!"

Tenth Episode:
THE MIXER AND THE MUTANT

From the Alumni Record:

The Old Grad Luncheon received a delightful surprise in the unannounced visit of Judge Frank Beverly, '97, donor of Beverly Hall.

X: *The Mixer and the Mutant*

JUDGE BEVERLY had promised his friend Biggers, president of the Continental and Union Bank of Chicago, to see his son at the old grad celebration.

"I wish you would look him up, Frank," Biggers had said, "and see just how he is making it. His letters are so indefinite! I should like to know just how he is situated."

Beverly had only one day to spend at his alma mater, the State University, and that day would be very crowded. As he stepped from the train it occurred to him that he might forget to look up Biggers' son. He paused and made a hasty note of it in his little red memorandum book, "Be sure see yng. Biggers."

Only the night before, Judge Beverly had decided to cancel his numerous engagements in the city and play truant. He was very glad no one knew of his arrival, pleased that no dean or dignitary met him this once. He enjoyed mingling with the college crowds at the station, and as he threaded his way to a taxicab he smiled in his exuberance at the students. Many nodded at the robust, ruddy stranger, not recognizing the famous Beverly smile but responding to its friendliness.

Even the taxicab driver grinned as he held the door open for this unmistakable personage, faultlessly groomed and quietly confident. Judge Beverly gave the address of the executive dean's office, knowing that Abrams would not be in later in the afternoon. The cab swerved

dangerously around the corners, cleverly avoiding reckless cars flaunting the college colors and filled with excited students. The houses along Fraternity Row bore the colors in bunting and impromptu adornments . . . shields, huge pennants, and mottoes spelled out in electric bulbs that would flare brilliantly that evening after the football game. Beverly leaned out of the window as the cab passed the A. O. G. house, his fraternity, chuckling at the sight of a youngster, coatless and shirtless, astride a gable where he was intently fastening a huge flashlight.

Beverly lit a cigarette, flourishing his match jauntily with a thick, white hand. When the first campus building loomed up, however, he quickly tossed his cigarette away, respecting the local tradition that men immolate nicotine for the gods of the higher learning.

As he entered the executive dean's inner office, Beverly referred to the incident in his opening words, "I came near smoking on the campus, Harry!" It was a manner Frank Beverly had of waiving greetings and beginning conversation while he shook hands. He and Abrams had been freshmen here together, but Abrams looked many years the older—a weary-eyed wisp of a man who passed and repassed his hand over his eyes as if the thousands of students he was reputed to recognize at sight had bedazed his vision.

Beverly's well-proportioned bulk seemed to crowd the office. As if aware of towering too obviously over the smaller man, the judge sat down at once. Some of his exuberance seemed gone now, and as he faced the rather limp, remote-eyed dean, lines became apparent in Beverly's face that had not accented it before.

The remarks of the pair were ashy and subdued. Long years of public phrase-making had extinguished the crackling spontaneity of their undergraduate chatter.

"Big crowds out there, are there?" Dean Abrams nodded at the window, a gesture of detachment that made his office seem aloof and unrelated.

"Yes, big crowds. Fine celebration."

"We always have fine celebrations. They are not so noisy, so abandoned as they were in our day. But with the increase in the student body we had to exercise some jurisdiction."

"Very wise, certainly," said Beverly. "There is a great deal of poppycoddle being talked about the younger generation—"

"This talk about bootlegging and improper dancing—" Abrams leaned forward, his eyes alight now, his body more alert—" 'petting,' women smoking! We don't have much trouble with it."

"None whatever, I hope." Beverly smoothed his nose thoughtfully. It was a fine straight nose and kept very lean and shapely by his little habit of stroking it. "The younger generation is sadly maligned, especially by these damnably impertinent newspapers. They are as wholesome and temperate as we could desire."

"Of course they are," said Abrams gratefully. "By the way, Frank, you must see Beverly Hall during your stay. They've begun work on it."

"I'm afraid I won't have time." Beverly modestly evaded the subject of the dormitory he was financing. "Hang it! Harry, I'd like to be just an old grad today. Just one of 'em."

"Well, you *are* one of 'em," began the dean warmly. "Always were loyal." Then he enlarged upon the theme, looking impersonally at his friend as if he were a large audience. "You gave this university whole-hearted service in all its activities and today you derive dividends of gratitude and recognition from it. What did we used to call you? . . . *Sunshine* Beverly!"

The judge laughed, a loud boyish laugh of hearty gusto.

"Yes, sir, I guess you did! *Sunshine*—" again his laugh shattered the startled silence of the room. After such a laugh he always grew abruptly silent and his face

took on a deeper gravity as if purged for the moment of all mirth. "My word, Harry, it's later than I thought! I want to drop in at the Old Grad luncheon. Oh, tell me, Harry, do you happen to know anything of a—let's see—a junior, called Andrew Biggers?"

The dean gazed at the ceiling a moment as if scanning innumerable portraits, sifting and sorting them. Then he said with quiet assurance:

"Yes, I know him. Blond, blue-eyed, well-built chap. His father is president of the Continental and Union Bank of Chicago."

"Biggers is a friend of mine. He wanted me to find out just how his son stood. Between you and me, quite frankly, how is he making it?"

"Very well, I believe," said Abrams, but his eyes seemed to guard some dissatisfaction. "He is—uh—is not what one might call *actively* interested in the University. That is to say, he seems a bit one-sided, a bit blind to the splendid opportunities of social development offered by such an institution. You yourself found the great value of a broad full life here where so many cross-roads of endeavor meet. I have tried to suggest—tried to convey to young Biggers—" the dean broke off, glancing at Beverly.

"He is not amenable——?"

"Exactly. He seems to feel no necessity for subordinating his aims to the regulations and routine of the institution. I suggest these things for his own good, you realize. He's not troublesome—I don't mean that—at least about nothing but his courses. He's continually dropping and reelecting them, I understand, and I daresay his credits are in bad shape."

"H'm," murmured Beverly, "h'm. Well, give *me* the broad, well informed student, the mixer every time! Now I rather expected . . . his father, you know, is emphatically all-round, broad, marvellously well informed on all subjects. And the son is a bit—uh—eccentric, is he?"

"I should say," replied Dean Abrams carefully, "that he is."

II

As he stepped blithely across the campus, Judge Beverly was noisily hailed by shouts from a roadster which came to a violent stop at the nearby curb. Out piled a half dozen A. O. G.'s, Andy Protheroe and Bill Lait in the lead.

"Well, well, Protheroe!" the judge chuckled fraternally as he shook hands with the fine-looking young cheerleader dressed in white flannels and dark blue coat. "How's tricks?"

"Great," said Andy. "We're all sitting pretty. Laid our bets three to one and the old school wins today, no doubt of it."

"Fine," murmured the judge. "Fine." He accepted Andy's invitation to ride and found himself holding on a bit breathlessly as the overloaded car dashed without restraint around a corner.

"Don't mind the speed, do you?" shouted Andy. "I've got to be over at the gym."

"I need a little speed," the judge roared gaily in reply. "After talking to Harry Abrams——!"

Bill Lait snorted with appreciation. "Harry's slower than a family car," he said wryly.

"Slow!" cried the judge. "He's dead, Bill. He's been enbalmed for many a year." A sly, rakish look twinkled in his eyes. "Still talking about wholesomeness and temperance! I tell you, boys, I'm glad I've never got to be a back number."

In front of one of the buildings Andy threw on four-wheel brakes with such earnestness that the judge felt sickeningly as if he had gone from the tenth floor to the first in a very fast elevator. But he leaped out with a courageous jauntiness and beamed at his young fraternity brothers. "Thanks, Protheroe, for the little lift." He

leaned forward and spoke in a low confidential tone. "Don't forget—the next time you come to Chicago. I can put you on to some real stuff. Better than that last case. . . ." He winked and slapped Andy on the back. "Look me up at my club."

"You're a real scout," said Andy feelingly.

Quick moisture suffused the judge's eyes at this tribute. "I'm not a back number," he said devoutly. He waved his stick as the roadster bounded away; and he turned toward the Union building with a light elastic tread, humming an airy fragment from the last musical revue he had seen in New York.

III

The rows of long tables traversing the great room were marked at intervals with maroon class numerals from '81 to '25. There was a little stir as Judge Beverly entered. Hat and stick in hand he strode across the floor to the nearest empty chair, ignoring the toastmaster's entreaty at one end of the hall. He looked about at the sea of old and young faces. Impossible to recognize one's friends! He turned to the girl at his left with an air of decorous gallantry.

"Say, I've missed the chicken patties!" he whispered. On the opposite side of the hall somebody was giving a toast. As the faint laughter of the small group which could hear the words penetrated to the larger body of graduates, these smiled appreciatively at the inaudible joke. "What is this, Waldorf salad?"

For some reason all the diners at that table had been staring in silence at the salad; now as Beverly began to eat, the others took up their forks. The girl at his left ate a bit of the lettuce and then said:

"Yes—yes, I think it *is* Waldorf salad."

"Now it's against my principles," said the judge in a light, gay tone, "to eat an alumni luncheon with a young lady I don't know. So——"

"Oh, my name is Weirs. Iva Weirs," she said breathlessly. "I—I heard you give the commencement address last year."

"You got your sheepskin last year, Miss Weirs? Do I have the name right—Weirs?"

"Yes, that's right. No, I graduated in '19. I'm teaching at Potts Academy this year. And it makes it awfully nice; I can get back so often." Through bone-rimmed glasses her eyes looked wistful. "It's funny; I'm the only one of that class here at this luncheon."

"Well now, Miss Weirs, I shan't tell you *my* class. I'm not frank enough to stand—I mean sit—by my numerals!" Beverly gave his loud shout of laughter.

A sad-faced fat man and his neighbor, a stern, gray-haired woman wearing a college arm-band, stared at Beverly with annoyance. Not having been introduced they had cherished their silence through two courses.

There was an empty chair at the judge's right. He turned again to Miss Weirs, who was nervously adjusting the collar of her georgette blouse. "I see you wear the Phi Beta Kappa key. You must have been a good student."

Pleased, she said: "I worked pretty hard—psychology. I never cared about the social life like a lot of students."

"Miss Weirs," said the judge earnestly, "this is an age of specialization. Yes sir, an age of specialization. Show me the man who narrows down his interests and I will show you the man who succeeds. You were interested in psychology; you had no time to fritter away. The younger generation is too often unwholesome and intemperate, bad-mannered numskulls. It's a real pleasure to meet a young woman like you who has some outstanding aim."

Her thin chest rose and fell quickly. She glanced up at him gratefully, the color coming and going in her face.

When the judge's laugh again drenched the tepid atmosphere like a sudden warm shower the stern gray-

haired woman spoke abruptly to the fat man. "Who *is* he?"

"Oh, he's that big judge from Chicago." The fat man groped laboriously out of silence into speech. "Didn't you read in the papers where he sent up six I.W.W.'s last week?"

"Well," said the stern woman, "he seems to be enjoying himself."

"Oh, he's a mixer," said the fat man enviously, "a born mixer."

IV

Judge Beverly arrived at the young journalists' luncheon in time for the coffee. He was an honorary member of this organization of student newspaper men and always enjoyed addressing them when he visited the campus. His dignity and air of authentic aristocracy fell off him like a cloak as he seated himself among these informal youngsters. Even his erect shoulders relaxed into an easy slouch and he spoke conversationally between slow, luxurious puffs at a cigar.

"I like this gang," he told them; "I'm one *of* you. Give me the young newspaper men of a university every time. They are the group that preserve the good fellowship and vital spirit that characterized the university when I knew it. I'll tell you, fellows, my stomach turns at the sight of these pale-faced, anemic mollycoddles that haven't guts enough to hold a decent celebration after a big game! Why, when I was a sophomore we used to tear down the old Orpheum and build it up again in one night.

"Don't be afraid to give expression to your youthful spontaneity. That's what you're here for. I don't know where we can expect to find any more enthusiasm and spirit than among our youthful journalists. Out in the world it's the same way. Where do we find fresh impulse and vigor? In the newspaper office. Where do we

find keen observation, sense of romance, true ethics? In the newspaper office. And there we find the mixers—the men who adapt themselves to any new stratum of human society.

"You are here in this journalism college to learn how to give the public its rightful due, that great commodity —*news*. And in order to do that you must study human nature. Your laboratory is as wide as the human race. That's why I always say, 'Give me the young newspaper men of a university or a nation.' There you will find the fresh courageous minds ready to grapple with old traditions and customs, and eager to infuse new life into the muscle-bound limbs of the old, lethargic thought!"

The applause was uproarious.

On leaving the young journalists the judge suddenly remembered his promise to Biggers. Beverly never broke a promise. He felt, however, as he hurried to a telephone, that his principle was proving rather a nuisance.

V

If Harry Abrams was a dean of an ancient regime, remote and weary-eyed, playing in his unrelated office with sentimental abstractions, Horace McLaren was a president of the new order: crisp, shrewd, a man of the world, a disciple of material progress and practical advancement. He manipulated projects for vast appropriations and nation-wide publicity. He desired fiercely to achieve for the State University a reputation for bigness . . . the most books, the hugest stadium, the largest grounds . . . an American behemoth of education fabulously proportioned and equipped with superlative jaws and digestive tract for the fastest mastication and assimilation of the largest fodder of students.

Short, rotund, somewhat choleric and abrupt, he was scarcely good company for men he suspected of "non-

sense." He was on excellent terms with Frank Beverly, and the pair found each other's conciseness and clipped thought very grateful in a world of maundering visionaries.

As they stepped from the president's car and took their tardy way along the packed stands to their seats, they appeared deep in important conversation, oblivious to the thousands who pointed them out and to the struggling football men on the green field.

"First game I've seen this year," McLaren said briskly. "Fine stadium, isn't it?"

"Finest in the country," replied Judge Beverly. His face and manner had undergone another change: his jaw seemed more square and aggressive, his eyes were piercing, his shoulders flung back confidently, his steps adapted to McLaren's quick, sure pace. They settled themselves in the concrete seats of the stadium's great bowl. Below, the football men looked like tumbling red and green beetles. The October sun was stationed over the field to watch the conflict. The tiny cheerleaders cavorting tirelessly before the bleachers seemed to hold the vast, barking crowd in leash like a mighty mastiff. Upon the blue sea of the sky floated an airplane, as graceful as a small black skiff.

"Glad to hear of your action in regard to those Reds, Frank. Nation needs to be swept clear of propagandists. University is fostering the men who are strong enough to do it."

"Damned newspapers made a sensational yarn out of that radical business. I presume that story about bootlegging students up here was merely a newspaper distortion? Deplorable if these wholesome young fellows——"

McLaren shook his head.

"Unfortunate distortion. We were rather upset about that story. Just at the time our appropriations bill was being introduced——"

"Naturally! But nobody believes the newspapers these days——"

Beverly broke off to watch the little darting green beetles vainly pursue a red beetle that scuttled triumphantly between two toothpicks with a brown pellet.

"Looks like our game, Horace."

"M'mph. By George! it's cold. I have a touch of bronchitis. Would you mind——?"

"No, my stomach feels heavy. I need a little exercise."

As they retraced their steps in front of the wildly cheering rooters, facetious voices called, "Stick! Stick!"

President McLaren frowned but Frank Beverly turned and lifted his hat, waving his stick airily at the impertinent youths. At once scattered voices united in a tribute to his friendliness:

"Yeah! Frank! Frank! Frank!"

The glow of the reddening sun suffused the handsome, florid face and lent an added brightness to the famous Beverly smile.

VI

Prepared as he had been for young Biggers' eccentricity, Judge Beverly felt this vivarium business a bit too annoying. He had been informed over the telephone that he might find Andrew Biggers here in the vivarium all afternoon. Doubtless the lad was toiling desperately for some necessary credits, but on the afternoon of the game! It was really too bad. Beverly had some difficulty in finding the right laboratory and as he entered it his sensitive nose scented an unpleasant, acrid stench.

Through oppressive silence a thin trickling of water, the conglomerate shapes of glass containers, coils of pipes, tanks, and iron sinks looming indefinably; in the gloomy twilight a head and shoulders visible beyond the strange chaos. A casual voice calling: "Oh, hello! Just a sec till I get this drain fixed."

Beverly fingered his stick impatiently. At last a tall figure in shirtsleeves and dangling black rubber apron emerged around the tank. As the judge made himself

known and mentioned the older Biggers' name, the blond young man appeared to listen but his cloudy blue eyes seemed vague and inattentive.

"Yes, I see," he murmured; "yes, I see. Glad you came in—" he broke off to stir something in a sauce-pan over a Bunsen burner.

"Are those—fish?" asked Beverly, staring at the darting shapes splashing and sliding behind the glass of a water-trough.

"Yuh—fish. And we've got some snails in there, too. Toads, too. They're Doc Schnittkind's. He's working with them. I'm working with *Drosophila.*"

"Dro——"

"*Drosophila.* A genus of fruit flies. 'Gnats,' I guess *you* call 'em. You've seen them on bananas? I feed mine bananas. Come over here a minute and I'll show you."

Moving gingerly, Beverly crossed the room and gazed speechlessly at thousands of crawling and flying insects, imprisoned but well banqueted on slimy sections of bananas disgustingly over-ripe.

Andrew Biggers seemed to expect some expression of delight but the judge felt somehow capable of none. So he said:

"But you had to miss the game."

"No, I didn't have to." (Beverly thought the young man sounded pert.) "This is important, what I'm doing. You see, if I neglect it I have to start all over. They die or something. Look here! This is the incubator. I keep this at the right heat, so I have a thousand or so hatching every day. See them in there?"

Beverly glanced at the glass incubator and hastily glanced away.

"You can see how fascinating it is," continued Andrew Biggers, wiping his big, damp, discolored hands on his apron. He spoke with a quick yet halting eagerness as if his mind were swooping and darting about half-expressed thoughts.

"Yes, very interesting." To his surprise the judge found himself tongue-tied and ill at ease. "I think we've won the game," he began again. And as he listened, he could hear distant cheering as faint as a teakettle boiling in an adjacent room.

Biggers ignored this remark and continued his own topic with naive rudeness.

"You may not know much about *Drosophila.* But Morgan has discovered about twenty-five characters—sex-linked characters—in the fruit fly, governing the color of the eyes and length of wings and all that."

"Oh, has he?" said Beverly with dry politeness. "I see."

"Yes, he has. And the *eyes* are my field. You see, the fly normally has a red eye but when mutations occur the eye is white. Look here through the microscope."

As one moving in a nightmare, Beverly adjusted his eye to the lens. The great crimson orb he stared at affected him unpleasantly and he gave a little cough of distaste.

"Who would have thought," he said unhappily, "that those things had red eyes! And they live on bananas, do they?"

"As I was saying," went on Biggers intently, "these mutations occur as the result of extrinsic or environmental forces working on the organism. And, y'see, I'm working to discover whether heat is one of these extrinsic forces that affect the color of the eye. Have I made it clear?"

"Very clear," said Beverly. "How long will it take you?"

"Well, the whole experiment—the effects of selection and that sort of thing on certain other characters of *Drosophila*—may take about four years or so. It's very slow, you know, counting facets and all that. It may not seem very important to you, but you must remember the result is applied to mankind."

"Eh?" Beverly had been looking at his watch.

"I say we can understand more about man's heredity when we know for certain how the eye of *Drosophila* adapts itself to environmental conditions."

"I thought environment—uh—heredity, you know, was pretty definitely settled," ventured the judge uncertainly.

Andrew Biggers smiled gently and gazed at the flies swarming on the over-ripe banana. Beverly gazed at them, too.

Whether from escaping gas or the fetid air or merely from fatigue, Beverly felt quite ill. The black insects blurred before his fascinated stare and became indistinct, then suddenly reappeared, enormously magnified, each with great, savage, blood-red eyes. He carefully wiped his forehead with a fresh handkerchief and moved toward the door. Scarcely aware of his own words, he said goodbye to Biggers and hurried out into the clear October air.

VII

He spent only a few minutes at his fraternity house on the way to the station. The men urged him to join them in their celebration of the great victory, but Beverly waved aside their too youthful home brew. He graciously passed around his own silver flask and finished draining it himself with a spirited toast:

"Here's to our team, boys! Here's to our team!"

But as he sank at last into the comfortable seat of his compartment he felt very tired, almost despondent. Damned red-eyed *Drosophila!* Nearly ruined his day!

He saw Tompkins, a prominent Chicago alderman and member of his club, passing through the train and beckoned him in. As they lighted cigars Beverly relaxed slowly into garrulous ease.

"Been dragging around that campus the whole day," he grunted petulantly to Tompkins, who was not a university man. "Had to be amiable to about a million

people. What homely women those co-eds are! And Biggers—you know the banker?" the judge asked.

Of course Tompkins knew Biggers.

"Well, he's got a son down there and unfortunately I promised to look him up. I tell you, I pride myself on being a good mixer but I'm damned if I could make any headway with *that* fellow! The fellow who gets on in this world, Tompkins, has to be a mixer and the big thing I learned in college was how to adapt myself, adjust myself to any environment, any stratum of human society.

"Some people think President McLaren is a hard man to talk to, and Dean Abrams—some people can't get his point of view, but I have no trouble adapting myself to either. And it's not a bit harder for me to talk to some bashful, homely female or to a bunch of fraternity youngsters. I can say without boasting, Tompkins, that this son of Biggers is about the first fellow-being that I've been absolutely at a loss with."

Beverly was growing heated again and his red face looked apoplectic. He seemed strangely upset.

"This boy's a type I've never met before in the American university. Has no interest in getting anything out of the school, no interest in human nature, no interest in anything! Stays all day in a stinking laboratory counting red-eyed bugs!"

He closed his own eyes as if to shut out the unpleasant memory of those crimson orbs.

"By God! I'll never be able to eat bananas again!"

Eleventh Episode:
THE P. G. WITH ROUGED EAR TIPS

From the Catalogue of the State University:

> *The program of work pursued by candidates for the Master's Degree must include research or special study.*

XI: *The P. G. With Rouged Ear Tips*

ANDY leaned against the bar of the Campus Soft Drink Parlor. He jiggled his glass until the double coke in it made a gentle, lapping sound. In the mirror behind the fountain he languidly surveyed the raccoon coat and flapping tweeds which euphemistically ascribed lines of bulk and ruggedness to his slender height.

He was silent.

About him on either side were seniors (lesser seniors) who were discussing silken ankles. But Andy was silent. Silent as a talkative man who has learned the value of silence.

"Did you ever," he propounded suddenly, interrupting this pale talk about ankles, "consider *ears?*"

"Seldom seen," said an inferior hopefully.

"Ears," said a senior with a hangover, who was hopefully gulping bromo seltzer, "ears—and I take it you mean female ears—went out in nineteen fifteen and are just now putting in a timid reappearance."

"Don't upstage me," muttered Andy petulantly, "with your stupid dates and statistics and all that old garbage."

After all he was Andy Protheroe and his renown on sorority porches would endure after McFee's football fame had gone the way of Greece and Rome . . .he would be remembered as long as a semester after his graduation. And who better could talk about ears, feminine ears, than a man notable for the phrases he could

sling in his dramatic criticisms, those very subjective treatises rich with lyrical references to bare knees?

Now as he straightened and skewered the other senior with a sharply supercilious glance, an expectant silence fell. Words would come: the glittering, cynical, polysyllabic absurdities of a suave and artful tongue.

"Whispering ankles," he mused, "speaking eyes, expressive hands—mid-Victorian stuff! Turn over the page to the talkative shoulders, the loquacious calves of a few years ago . . . they're *passé,* too. Even the embrace that shouts and the kiss you love to hear—they're gone with the flapper and her legs. Put away in mothballs along with hoopskirts."

After a long and histrionic pause his low voice suddenly startled.

"But have you ever," he said, "considered ears—*ear tips?* For instance, the subtle and indubitably concealed but possibly eloquent ear tips of Doctor Christine Griffith, the dowdiest woman instructor on the campus?"

He paused triumphantly, his audience well in hand. The group about him was too conscious of its sophistication to gasp aloud but figuratively and behind its cokes it gasped, nevertheless.

And now that he had got his climax Andy Protheroe was not the man to spoil his drama with explanation. His face growing thoughtful and responsible as if he had just remembered an appointment, he placed a meticulous dime on the counter and went out.

"I'm going to her class now," he said at the door.

II

The evening before Andy Protheroe propounded his famous Theory of Ears at the soft drink parlor he had called upon Miss Christine Griffith. He had called upon her unwillingly and with some trepidation, for he had had meager social experience with instructors and he was

not quite sure how to adapt his speech and manners to this nicer audience.

He felt his clothes to be too disgustingly modern, his moustache too coy, his voice too effusive as he entered the subdued, bookish interior of the little apartment. Miss Griffith had a copy of the *Atlantic Monthly* in one hand and a tea cannister in the other. Above her high collar and mannish necktie her smooth face looked bland and imperviously mature. About her head neat plaits of hair wound in placid coils.

"I am making tea!" she exclaimed buoyantly in her rich New England voice.

Andy felt her enthusiasm to be far-fetched. After all, it wasn't cocktails she was making, was it? Seated by the fireplace, sipping his tea gingerly, Andy wished that by some splendid coup he might deflect her from the purpose she had previously announced to him in her office.

"I ra-illy feel, Mr. Protheroe, that I shall flunk you in Rhetoric 7A," she had said dreamily only that afternoon.

And he had come to her home tonight to argue with her and over-master her, and she had disarmed him . . . with tea. "Stupid, dowdy, idiotic creature," he was thinking; then to defend his lack of gallantry, "Women are pretty or else they aren't." He stared morbidly at her long, baggy tweed coat, the cloth bag of books and shapeless brown felt hat which hung in the tiny hall of the apartment. With a start he realized that her well-enunciated words had been smoothly flowing past him all this time:

"—and the rule cannot be broken. The four-thousand-word narrative must be turned in at the end of the semester. The semester ends, of course, on Saturday. You say you cannot write a narrative——"

"I can't, Miss Griffith," he interrupted eagerly, hopefully.

It was true. And Ted Allison, who had been writing

Andy's themes all year at expensive rates, was in the hospital. He could hardly explain about Ted. . . . Under the kindly influence of the tea he wondered for a moment if he couldn't. Her maternal sympathy (and Andy thought that all women who weren't pretty must necessarily be maternal) would be aroused by Ted—poor, poor Ted lying weak and wan with the flu, quite unable to write Andy's long narrative. . . . But with customary sagacity he knew it wouldn't do. She was from New England. She had a Puritan conscience. She was disgustingly moral.

He raised his dark, effective eyes to her, making them wide with candor. "The written word just isn't my medium. The spoken word, sure. The wit scintillates, the vicious phrase grabs attention."

He paused, wondering if his famous, well-earned "line" had any chance with her—*any* chance? "But a narrative!" He shrugged his thin, elegant shoulders with a gesture many co-eds had found "marvelously Continental."

"Themes—episodes—anecdotes—I've handed them in promptly, Miss Griffith, all semester." (And Ted had written good ones, too, even if his rates were a bit high.) "I haven't failed once. Thirty-four, to be exact. I've been actually extravagant—with words, you know. I haven't been economical—in my phrases, that is. . . . But stories, plots, narratives! All of them have been written. There aren't any left."

Her response was to slump down in her wicker chair, stretch out her large, low-heeled shoes to the fire and smooth her eyebrows slowly with her blunt fingers.

"Mr. Protheroe," she said, "did you ever consider ear tips?"

"Feminine gender?"

"Yes."

"Nobody has for years—until some of the recent haircuts."

"Exactly. And just for that reason might they not

be subtle, though indubitably concealed, but possibly eloquent?"

"Possibly eloquent," said Andy with gusto, "but probably not relevant to Rhetoric 7A."

"The business of a narrator is to discover new relevances. I have a story in mind, a story still unwritten. It has to do with ear tips." Still smoothing her eyebrows, she began swiftly in a low, colorless voice: "There was once a girl, a drab and conscientious creature who spent four dull years at a State University, one very like this one, here in the Middle West. She had not a 'date,' Mr. Protheroe, nor even a compliment, nor any dahnce dresses, nor kisses, nor any gaiety."

"I know the kind," said Andy.

"To be sure. You know the kind. We describe the girl so every reader 'knows the kind'. Then we surprise him."

"Bread pudding with the unsuspected soul of chocolate parfait," Andy broke in. He had used the phrase before but it was his phrase.

"Exactly! . . . But we digress. This girl had wanted gaiety but she was quite right in studying instead of seeking it. At the end of her college life she would have to earn her living. So she went on studying Latin and Greek and English epics, but starved all the time for beauty and passion and joy. After she was graduated she was filled with a deep rebellion. She decided to take just one year of concentrated gaiety at a different college where she was not known. She enrolled as a post-graduate—I suppose you would call it a P. G? It was a small college, let us say, and not hard to startle if one made use of mildly fantastic gestures."

There was a long stillness. Miss Griffith, sitting motionless, seemed to have forgotten her listener.

Then—"She rouged her ear tips," she said at length. "Do you remember a time when women wore their hair dragged grotesquely up from their necks, leaving their ears quite exposed? The girl I am telling you about

assumed this style of hair dressing. The other girls dressed their hair in that fashion, of course. But the thing the P. G. did which none of them had thought of was to rouge her ear tips, violently and dramatically.

"And, moreover, she called attention to it. Especially in the midst of groups. 'I always rouge my ear tips!' she would exclaim——"

"The other girls would do it, too," Andy pointed out, fascinated by the idea . . . rows and rows of delicate, exotic little ears, the gay lobes riotous with rouge. . . .

"Yes," admitted Miss Griffith, "yes, that is what they did. It became eventually the thing to do, common and unsurprising. For college students are so timorous and conservative that only a pace-maker is needed to fasten any ridiculous mode upon the moment," she commented, placidly eyeing the garterless socks which hung mournfully from Andy's ankles. "But the girl who began this mode was always known as *The P. G. with Rouged Ear Tips.* Long after the fashion ran its course she retained her pride in the unique title. It meant to her—kisses and compliments and dahnce dresses. Through it she had approached beauty and mystery . . . and tears, and moonlight."

"She had become the campus vamp?" asked Andy, skeptical on this point and wanting some definite assurance.

"N-no," said Miss Griffith, a bit reluctantly. "Not exactly. But to *herself,* you see. And that was quite as good."

The room seemed very still. The log crackled and burst into ruddy flame before Andy spoke.

"Go on," he said impatiently as a small boy.

"Ears went out!" Miss Griffith's laugh seemed too flippant. "The girl had to pin her hair over her rouged ear tips and wear stupid clothes and set at earning her living somewhere. Quite hard she would have to work to pay for that irrational year, you see."

"Irrational ear?" Andy punned irrepressibly, hoping she would not be offended.

She was not. She laughed with a touch of hysteria.

"And when you write the story, Mr. Protheroe, you must emphasize that continued irrationalism. That is the climax. Wearing her drab clothes she persists in rouging her ear tips, even though they are concealed by a respectable and uninteresting coiffure."

"But—why——?"

"I don't know." She waved her hands a little wearily as if she were dismissing the tale and Andy. "As a whim, perhaps. Or as a defiant symbol . . . of unsuspected youth. Perhaps as a reassurance to herself . . . that she once comprehended life's undiscovered glamor."

As he went down the street Andy stared hard at the drawn curtains of Miss Griffith's dim window.

"That woman has a vicious line," he told himself. "A *vicious* line." And he did not smile.

III

Andy did not write the narrative. Quite humbly he felt himself to be unworthy of it. And the nearest he ever came to relating this theme which puzzled and disturbed him was to make his enigmatical remarks the next day in the Campus Soft Drink Parlor.

"Have you ever," he asked the group, "considered ears —*ear tips?* For instance, the subtle and indubitably concealed but possibly eloquent ear tips of Doctor Christine Griffith, the dowdiest woman instructor on the campus?"

And after leaving his meticulous dime on the counter he hurried across the yard to the Rhetoric 7A class in University Hall. He was even a bit ahead of time.

He established his well-groomed person in a chair squarely in front of Miss Griffith's desk. He toyed moodily with his frail moustache as Miss Griffith entered the musty classroom.

She came in with a slow, firm tread and placed her green cloth bag of books carefully on the desk. She took off her long, baggy tweed coat and hung it on a hook. She took off her shapeless brown felt hat, and as she did so she quickly rearranged a strand of hair that had become loosened over her right ear. . . . And having had that one fleeting glimpse of a defiant symbol of unsuspected youth, having comprehended in that glimpse that life's glamor is too often undiscovered—Andy did not mind in the least when Miss Griffith said to him after class:

"I am very sorry that you did not hand in your narrative, Mr. Protheroe. I shall have to flunk you in Rhetoric 7A. I ra-illy shall."

Twelfth Episode:
THAÏS AND THE REV. MR. MENNEN

From the Descriptive Bulletin of the State University:

> *Religious life on and off the campus is fostered by churches of all denominations.*

XII: *Thaïs and the Rev. Mr. Mennen*

CHAMPAGNE and the turkey trot! They are damning the souls of too many of our young people here in the State University today. Indecent dress, immoral dances, late hours! Is it any wonder that some of our most modest young women who have come here to be educated have lost their ideals? Is it any wonder that the 'flapper,' as she is called in modern slang, is fast becoming a menace to the present generation of young people?"

Forrest Mennen paused, his round, red face unnaturally solemn. It was a moonlight night of Spring and he was in his dim, stuffy study preparing his sermon for the following Sunday—carefully writing down in detail the points he intended to make. He did not realize that he had given this same sermon almost word for word each Spring of the seventeen years he had been pastor of the shabby little Second M. E. Church. Time had dealt gently with the Rev. Mr. Mennen, closing his eyes to many things . . . the fact that the parsonage was still unpainted although the Ladies Aid Society had begun a futile campaign in 1921 to raise the money . . . the gradual dwindling of his flock into a few grim and faithful exponents of the old-fashioned religion . . . the desertion of all his wealthy, influential members to the First M. E., a big and imposing "church home" where the pastor was a glad-hander and go-getter welcome at any Kiwanis meeting in the State, and where the ceremonies

took on a slight tinge of pomp and Romanism as the aristocracy of the congregation grew.

The Rev. Mr. Mennen did not know that he was hopelessly a back number, although it must have occurred to him that his salary had remained stationary for a decade. He even supposed that State University students of the Methodist faith still attended his church occasionally and often he prepared a sermon to interest them . . . but they preferred the snappy, painless, twenty-minute addresses at the First M. E.

He lived his life within a little circle of beneficence and light—and the darkness outside was vaguely peopled with strange Demons . . . White Slavers, Flappers, Broadway, the Pope, Coffin Nails, the Liquor Interests, Ward Bosses, Champagne and the Turkey Trot. He believed that it was the rice paper, not the tobacco, which made cigarette fiends. He believed that the organized rum trade lured growing boys into an alley and gave them their first drink, thereby fastening the habit on them and recruiting new trade to replace dying drunkards. He believed that young girls from the country were met at city railway stations by oily-tongued strangers with spurious offers of marriage. Indeed, the Rev. Mr. Mennen once thought that he had detected a White Slaver, but the fellow turned out later to be a Packard salesman.

He never really encountered any of his other Demons face to face; they were always in the darkness outside waiting slyly for an opportunity to enter unseen. For years he had heard about the depravity of a senior named Protheroe, an arrant turkey-trotter and champagne-guzzler; but one evening when he shook hands at a mass meeting with a dark-eyed gentle, respectful youth who said Sir, the Rev. Mr. Mennen wondered who such a fine, Christian young man could be.

On fifty-one Sundays of the year he preached vague, rambling, endless sermons which were as mild as his own near-sighted blue eyes. He was a lame, halting speaker and his voice always choked when he came to the sad

parts, completely ruining the effect. In the choir his wife sang solos like *Jerusalem, the Golden* in her shrill, tremulous soprano. When they were home after the evening service, seated near the glowing hard coal stove, Mrs. Mennen roasted chestnuts. She was fat and jolly and earthly; her tremendous vitality had lightly carried the practical burdens of educating three children on their small income.

"Haven't people been good to us, Forrest?" she would often ask, laughing her robust laugh. She laughed at everything.

His smooth, bulging face would grow solemn with gratitude for the benefits heaped upon them by life. He looked like an ingenuous, well-fed small boy who had somehow attained the age of fifty.

In devoted, understanding silence broken only by the sharp crackle of the chestnuts, they sat by the fire each Sunday evening until the Rev. Mr. Mennen dozed off. He woke sheepishly when he heard his wife bustling about the kitchen to prepare the oatmeal for the next morning.

On the fifty-second Sunday of the year it was different. Each Spring the pastor's content was pierced by uneasy rumors of his Demons. Some sunny day in April he would start from the warm comfort of his routine to notice the students strolling about bare-headed in pairs; the flash of high-powered cars; shouted song carrying faintly from Fraternity Row; the moan of a jazz band.

This vast, restless force of youth disturbed him . . . made him wonder if he were not growing just a little lax in his duty. And invariably he announced a Young People's Revival Service for the following Sunday. No young people ever responded but in the front pew Mrs. Graham, who kept a student rooming house, nodded grimly; and old Mr. Seever always congratulated him after the service.

"Reverend Mennen, I want to tell you—that was a splendid talk. Yes sir, splendid." Leaning forward

significantly, he would lower his voice and add. *"Just what we need nowadays!"*

On the following Wednesday *The Mid-Western Christian Message,* a small religious weekly published in the university town, would appear with shocked headlines:

STUDENT MORALS AT LOW EBB,
SAYS PASTOR

Daring Dances and Wine Drinking
Prevalent at University

For seventeen years it had been like that.

II

In Havre, a prairie village of two hundred inhabitants, Frank Lane had grown to look forward to the spring number of *The Mid-Western Christian Message* which would contain the Rev. Mr. Mennen's warning. He was a stingy retired farmer who declared agressively that one religious journal was enough for anybody to "keep posted"; and he liked the *Message* because it cost only seventy-five cents a year.

"Didn't I tell you, mother?" he would growl triumphantly to his wife, his sallow, weather-beaten features lighting with interest as he scanned the headlines. "That State University's getting worse every day."

He was stern when Laura, the oldest girl, timidly announced that she had won a scholarship in the Havre High School which would entitle her to tuition at the State University. He refused at once, despite the lure which anything free had for him; and yet he was almost as disappointed as the tearful girl—the University in its wickedness had grown fascinating to him during the years. And when at last he gave his grudging consent he could hardly wait until Laura returned for her first vacation.

"Find things pretty bad down there?" he asked with hardly suppressed eagerness. "Turkey-trotting and all that?"

But Laura, always a quiet, studious girl, had encountered nothing scandalous in college life. She had become a pledge of Halcyon House, a local sorority which paraded its high ideals at every opportunity, and she was devoting her spare moments to collecting for the Grace Dormitory Missionary Training Fund.

In her senior year when she anounced her engagement to Skid Derby, the football star, her father was certain that she had at last fallen prey to the gilded night life of the campus which the Rev. Mr. Mennen annually advertised. But young Derby proved to be a good provider, a steady husband and father; and once more Mr. Lane was puzzled and doubtful. He was not entirely reassured until the Spring when the Rev. Mr. Mennen compared collegiate circles favorably with ancient Babylon.

He read the article aloud with gusto and new faith. But the only one of the family who listened was Ann Mary, now a girl-child of fourteen in her first year of high school. Her eyes grew wide and her heart thumped. Without finishing her dessert, she slipped away from the supper table and scampered upstairs to her room.

She stood on tiptoe before the mirror and arranged her hair into what she fancied to be a more sophisticated frame for her schoolgirl face. She tried to assume a nonchalant, languid expression but succeeded only in looking like a kitten leering.

The next day she whispered to Alice Waverly, her bosom friend, with an air of wickedness and secrecy, "I think I'm going to—the State University!"

III

Spring was dreary and aloof . . . the Rev. Mr. Mennen was several weeks late this year. Then one day April

kissed the prairie with passion and fervor; youth ran riot about the small university town and *The Mid-Western Christian Message* appeared with a particularly vehement warning against the sin and folly of collegiate life.

As usual Mr. Lane read it aloud to the family. After supper he strolled out into the back yard at dusk. He leaned over the fence . . . a thin, stooped man of sixty, broken by years of struggling with the soil. The prairie dusk was warm and living. The western sky was filled with clouds like lavender veils flung over the rosy limbs of dancers. Because he remembered foolish evenings when he was a boy, Frank Lane felt that all this color and beauty was faintly immoral—after the dun winters of the plains-country, Spring was too lovely; it aroused the suspicions of good people who had striven for years to live a decent life of common sense.

Frank Lane felt beaten; and when Ann Mary asked permission to go to the State University he gave his consent wearily.

"I guess so. I was always against Laura's going, but since she went I don't see why you can't."

Ann Mary walked blindly upstairs to her room, for her eyes were full of ecstatic tears. She felt as if she were bursting with life, like a fluffy little bud in the warm May sunshine. She wanted to shriek, to dance, to run; she loved life so terribly that for a moment she wanted to die.

Yet she was not afraid of life or of death like these older people about her. They had given her to understand that life was immoral, and in her inexperience she accepted it on their valuation. She groped toward the sins which the Rev. Mr. Mennen described so alluringly each year, and her childish imagination adorned them with new colors. Tremulously she pictured herself drinking champagne with a dissipated university youth, kissing him nonchalantly. That was escape. Escape from the drab future of a prairie village where girls

married young and compressed their youth into rigid lines of duty and solemnity. . . . Sometimes she had doubts. Even to her unworldly mind many of the Rev. Mr. Mennen's favorite vices seemed a bit obsolete. Laura had done none of these things—but Laura had always been a quiet, studious girl, and maybe the pastor had only grown forgetful. Ann Mary hoped. . . . That night she stole downstairs after her parents were in bed and got the forbidden "doctor book" from the top shelf of the kitchen cabinet. But its prurient, quasi-scientific pages were a disappointment—surely life could not be so appalling and stupid as the doctor book represented?

At first the State University fell far short of Ann Mary's anticipations. There was the machine-like routine of registration, a few official parties at which herds of frightened freshmen were patronized by the upperclassmen . . . then grim study with the threat of failure always in the background. For the University, in order to defend itself from the hordes which it sought in its aspiration to bigness, was forced inhospitably to flunk a few hundred freshmen every year. Ann Mary studied tigerishly.

Not until the second semester was she sure of a foothold. Then she began to have a few dates with freshmen introduced to her by the other girls of the rooming house. When she left them at the door she could look across the street and see the Rev. Mr. Mennen's dimly lighted study (her mother had insisted that she room at a place which Laura recommended as "safe") and Ann Mary sometimes wondered if at last she were not pursuing the sins which the pastor had unwittingly suggested for so many years. But the men who took her home were always unimportant figures in university life and she only allowed one of them to kiss her goodnight.

IV

The evening of her first date with Andy Protheroe, Ann Mary knew that finally she had found the University. Everything was so beautiful and joyous . . . the glitter of stars and the whisper of a great willow whose leafy foliage made a lacy pattern of silver against the brooding moon. Andy's swaggering car . . . the faint odor of rich fields, of fading wild roses and pungent mint.

And he had kissed her, fiercely and tenderly. No man had ever kissed her that way before.

"Which sorority do you want to pledge?" he had asked carelessly.

It was lovely, lovely! . . . And how could unworldly little Ann Mary know that Andy was sad as he helped her out of the car in front of her rooming house? How could Ann Mary know that she was so heart-breakingly young and fresh and innocent? . . . Andy's kiss was a sacrament, but Ann Mary only knew that she must try to seem languid and nonchalant as she reached up on tiptoe and threw her arms about him.

And she caught her breath, delightedly thinking that at last she was part of that wicked campus life which the Rev. Mr. Mennen had made so fascinating!

V

In his dim study the Rev. Mr. Mennen walked absently to the window and looked out at the pale, moonlit street. At the opposite curb a low, rakish roadster came to a stop with a whine of brakes. A young man got out, an arrogant young man who tossed away a cigarette. There was a flash of draperies, a gleam of silken legs, and a girl stood beside him. The two figures merged together in a quick kiss. The girl laughed as she ran up the steps and turn to wave . . . her laugh was the youngest,

freshest, most enchanting thing that anybody has ever heard. . . .

It shattered all the content which the Rev. Mr. Mennen had stored up during the winter. It made him realize that he had been just a little lax in his duty. He went back to the study table and sat in earnest thought a long time. Then he began writing his sermon for the next Sunday.

"Champagne and the turkey trot! They are damning the souls of too many of our young people here in the State University today. Indecent dress, immoral dances, late hours! Is it any wonder that some of our most modest young women who have come here to be educated have lost their ideals? Is it any wonder that the 'flapper,' as she is called in the modern slang, is becoming a menace to the present generation of young people?"

Thirteenth Episode:
WHAT WAS SO FUGITIVE

From the Historical Note in the University Catalogue:

> *In 1914 Dr. Horace McLaren was elected president. During the time he has held office the student body has increased from 6,000 to 10,000.*

XIII: *What Was So Fugitive*

AFTER meeting here and there with casual indifference for two years Phoebe Fairlie and Ted Allison fell in love. Neither of them could understand just how it was that suddenly one night at an ordinary dance they saw each other as if for the first time. It was a hot, sultry evening. Phoebe was bored with the music and with George Rutledge, who had brought her. Sitting in a corner by the stairs she abruptly, even sulkily, gave George's face a quick push with the palm of her hand when he tried to kiss her. He had kissed her before. There was no reason why he should be repulsed this evening. But all at once she could not bear his red, rather heavy face and she pushed it away so firmly that her palm flattened his nose and turned it down at the tip with a quite ludicrous effect.

She laughed hysterically and jumping up started to mount the stairs for no reason at all except a hazy notion of escape from his surprised outrage. On the landing she met Ted Allison coming down. He had been in his room trying to write belated copy for *The Lame Duck* in spite of the dance going on below; his thin face was white and tired and his hair was tumbled over his forehead; he wore an old khaki sweater and knickers. Afterward Phoebe said that it might have been his rumpled hair and this shabby sweater which made him suddenly a different person. She stood still, looking into his eyes, and all at once she felt tongue-tied and frightened and shaken with an inner tremulousness.

Of course he caught this odd emotion from her immediately and as if panic-stricken by a new, magical

vision of Phoebe he began with numb fingers to button his sweater carefully to the top.

"You are buttoning it all crooked," said Phoebe in a low voice.

"I know," he said; and after a moment he began carefully to unbutton it again. "Do you like to dance on a hot night like this?" he asked.

"No," said Phoebe, "I don't." She looked down as if in apology at her short, ruffling skirts of golden-rose; in this hour of pain and fear it seemed no time to be wearing frivolous golden-rose gowns.

"I was trying to work and I got to reading," he went on in a sort of desperation. "Poetry. Makes one groggy to read poetry. Anyhow it does me." He raised his eyes to her grave, fair face and looked away again. "Verlaine. D'you know that one. . . .

Around were all the roses red,
The ivy all around was black."

"I don't think so," replied Phoebe, finding in surprise that her voice was hoarse. "How does it go?"

He shrugged. He muttered:

"Dear, so thou only move thine head
Shall all mine old despairs awake!

Too blue, too tender was the sky,
The air too soft, too green the sea.

A Dowson translation," he observed gruffly. "And then —it goes—

Always I fear, I know not why,
Some lamentable flight from thee."

As he said these words the tears came into her eyes and she crushed a fold of the short ruffling dress with a fierce hand. He reached out and caught her bare arm

and shook her a little. "Phoebe!" he cried. "What . . . what in hell is happening . . . to us?"

She flung herself against him, holding tightly to his shoulders while he patted the back of her neck very gently. Even in this shaken moment with her wet face against Ted's old khaki sweater she saw as in a clear white light what had happened. "We're in love," she said. "That's all." Her voice was sad and wise and tender. She felt older than Ted. He was so bewildered and his breath came so uncertainly.

"Yes, that's it," he stammered. "Hurts, doesn't it?"

"Hurts terribly," she whispered. "But I don't care. I want to be."

"Yes, I want to be, too. . . . But, oh Phoebe! Phoebe! Phoebe!"

They kissed each other hesitantly, wonderingly and at last in a strangely rapturous misery; they were surprised that love could come with such swiftness and such pain. Over her shoulder he could look across the balustrade into the hall below. He became hazily conscious that a man down there was staring up at them with an angry, incredulous gaze.

"Look, Phoebe! What's he staring like that for?"

She said dreamily: "It's nobody but George. Don't mind him."

II

Phoebe was ending her sophomore year and Ted was to be graduated that June. In the Pi Omega porch swing they sat every evening talking solemnly about what they could do. The fact of loving each other was so immutable that it swerved their whole lives into unfamiliar channels. Ted had meant to work on a Chicago newspaper until he saved a little money and then he had fancied himself in Paris studying art. But Phoebe wanted to finish college . . . grave, determined Phoebe, with her straight

red mouth and straight yellow hair . . . she was shocked at the thought of not finishing school. Her parents would be shocked, too.

"But if we marry—" began Ted; and he stopped at the alarming sound of his words.

"Marry!" cried Phoebe. "What has this got to do with marrying?"

"Don't be ingenuous," said Ted, holding her head against his shoulder with stern fingers. "Under our present social system, like it or not, love drives us into marriage."

"Can't we invent a new system?" pleaded Phoebe. "Marriage seems so stodgy, so awful."

"Look here, do you love me, Phoebe, or do you not?"

For answer she pressed his long, lean hand to her face.

"Well, then——"

"Oh, all right. But I had always wanted something interesting and bohemian like free love or trial marriage or——"

Ted snorted. "Damn it, Phoebe, I may be bourgeois but I want to be *sure* of you."

They were married in August at Phoebe's home in a drowsy mid-Western town. Her father was a lawyer, a mild-eyed, stooped man who took long walks morning and evening, poking the path ahead of him with a stick and frowning thoughtfully as if something in life eluded him and he were constantly in search of it. Her mother was slim and eager and ambitious; her mouth was a little petulant as Phoebe's would never be; her white, still, lovely hands restless and always clutching at something, with fine, old-fashioned rings throwing a sardonic glitter from the fingers. . . . It seemed strange to Ted, hearing these people say, "Phoebe, dear——"

Ted's parents did not make the trip from Oklahoma; there were so many other children in Ted's family; the journey would have been long and expensive. Mr. Allison was the editor of a small newspaper. He had helped

Ted through college and now he was glad that his son was marrying, going to be responsible and steady. "Your mother and I," he wrote on a battered old typewriter which Ted remembered for its broken "g," "think it's a mighty good thing that you are going to settle down. I see no reason why you shouldn't do well, you have a good education and there are so many opportunities open to the college man. Sorry I can't do any more to help you but you know the younger ones are coming along and mus be educated and only last week Clint had to have another loan." Clint was the oldest brother, a ne'er-do-well who had never finished high school and was trying unsuccessfully to run a garage as his latest venture. Ted was different. He was the great hope of the rather improvident family. Mrs. Allison always spoke of him proudly, her plump, florid face beaming: "You know Ted took his A. B. degree this June, *with honors.* They seem to think so much of him at his University, even the professors."

Ted's father closed his letter on this note of pride: "We think it's mighty fine that you have helped to put yourself through college what with your newspaper work and university magazine and all. Expect we'll be hearing big things of you now that you are starting out in the world. Your mother and I send our best wishes to the little bride. Aff'y, etc., Dad."

Ted knew his father was sentimental . . . imagine calling Phoebe the little bride! How surprised the Allisons would be at her pencilled eyebrows and rouged mouth, her pretenses of sophistication! . . . Nevertheless his eyes felt hot and dim as he reread the last paragraph and carefully put the letter away in his vest pocket. Expected big things, did they? Well. . . .

Phoebe's mother was obviously somewhat anxious and uneasy about Ted. She admitted that he was a fine-looking young man, so tall and straight with his waving black hair and dark, quizzical eyes—granted, too, that his manner was very winning, his fraternity pin large and

jeweled. But editing a humorous college magazine, playing a guitar, painting in oils a little, liking poetry—just what did these things amount to? And they were all things that Phoebe boasted about as if they were actual achievements. Of course Phoebe had married him. Phoebe had always done what she chose from childhood. But why had Ted not taken his wife on a proper honeymoon instead of just staying here at Lonsdale for the rest of the summer? It seemed a little odd to the town. . . . And Ted had promised that Phoebe should finish college, yet he had no sign of a job for the coming year.

As the summer months wore on the youngsters grew harassed and troubled, even defensive about their overwhelming love, sheltering and hiding it as if it were a shy child to be shielded from the world. They spent a great deal of time lying on the bed in Phoebe's room smoking cigarettes, since Phoebe dared not smoke elsewhere. They were still so unaccustomed to this new, astonishing intimacy that their minds resented the intrusion of any ideas not personally concerning themselves. They were obsessed, intoxicated with each other, overpowered by a heavy stupor of first love that lulled the mind, quickened the senses and replaced thoughts with fancies as absurd and delicious as dreams.

Through this woven halcyon veil with which they had shrouded themselves the little worries about money and achievement pierced intermittently like sharp, flashing arrows. One night Phoebe awoke to find Ted kneeling beside her, his cheek against her shoulder. "Ted, what is it? Ted!"

"It was the moonlight on your face. You look so lovely when you're asleep. And then I'm afraid——" He broke off to stare bitterly at the white night pressing against the window. "I'm supposed to *take care* of you, Phoebe! I feel baffled and—scared, sort of, sometimes. You're so young. Do you think I know enough to take care of you?"

She pressed his hand against her breast and nodded

devoutly. "I'm a pretty smart young thing myself; I'm not a baby!"

"I know you're not. But what if there would *be* one? My God? This money business. I'm supposed to know all about that—supposed to go out and grab the world by the ear—and I'm damned if I know how! . . . Do you think I'm a coward, Phoebe? Other men get married and they're not scared."

"Maybe they are," said Phoebe wisely, "but they won't admit it."

It was the next day that a letter came from Professor Fannicott and Ted found that his application for a position as a rhetoric instructor had been approved. Ted and Phoebe were jubilant. He would receive $1,200 for the school year. It seemed a great deal of money. Phoebe lightly forgot that she had spent more than that herself when she was an expensively gowned and popular sophomore.

III

They took one small room at a neat little house in the faculty district. Before they had been in this furnished room a day Phoebe made it look wonderfully snug with some of the things she had brought in one trunk. A woven black and white cover on the broad low couch; a doll lamp with bouffant taffeta skirts on the little table below a mirror, and amber and pearl toilet things in a semi-circle about the lamp; a frieze of bright water-colors in a prim march all around the walls; a tea-set of blue and canary lustre; orange-patterned cretonne at the windows and an astonishingly fragile gold-lace cushion on the floor.

It was delightful to be quite alone, to spend long evenings together crowded tightly into the large armchair (I wish we had a fireplace, sighed Phoebe), to look over the mail on the hall-table for letters addressed to *Mrs. Theodore Allison,* to meet at the small tearoom on the

corner for luncheon. In classes it seemed strange and thrilling to be called Mrs. Allison. She rested her slim hand with its white-gold band and small diamond on the back of her chair, thinking of the surprise that other girls must feel: "How young she is to be married!" But it was not so pleasant when the men sauntered away from class with other co-eds and Phoebe was left to a solitary walk across the campus with no invitation to ride around the broad, tree-shaded driveways; and now there was nobody asking her into the You'll Come Inn for a coke and a cigarette, there was no date-book crowded with straggling names and frantic erasures, no telephone clamoring constantly for Miss Fairlie, no crowd of men loitering on the Pi Omega veranda with Phoebe beautiful and grave in the center of the group.

But loving adulation, frivolity and luxury, Phoebe was never a silly creature. Many of her elders mistook the exaggerated, bright-colored garments she wore, the rouge and lipstick and high heels for mere silliness or abandonment; but these were the emblems of her youth and the insignia of her first, faint, tremulous gropings toward a sounder gaiety of the spirit. In reality she turned a stern face toward life (not knowing how weak and cowardly, and sometimes tyrannical or indecent life can be), demanding that life face her frank young stare in courage and without hypocricy. She was fiercely intolerant, even potentially capable of cruelty and martyrdom, which go hand in hand; in another age she could have burned witches or been burned as a witch if either procedure meant keeping faith with an idea.

When Miss Griffith, who lived in a room just below the young Allisons, called one afternoon (the semester was well into December) she found Phoebe darning a huge pile of Ted's socks with clumsy determination. Miss Griffith was amused; having chaperoned dances at which Phoebe behaved flippantly, sometimes even a bit shockingly, the sight of her darning socks was too

ludicrous. But she did it without the least air of domestic placidity, sitting erect in a high-backed chair and jabbing angrily at the frayed wool with her long needle. Open on the table beside her lay a volume of philosophy. She said that she had been trying to study this at the same time but now her eyes were tired. Miss Griffith thought she looked thin and a little pale.

"Your room," said Christine Griffith approvingly, "is charming."

"I know," said Phoebe, scowling at a jagged hole in an apologetic gray toe.

"And large," added the English instructor, "as rooms go."

Their eyes met and Phoebe laughed. "I was thinking of the Pi Omega house. How big and luxurious . . . you know I lived there two years. Doesn't it seem funny?"

"Ah!" Miss Griffith nodded thoughtfully. "I've often wondered if those houses were quite fair to young people's notions of life. Is it difficult," she asked, "to make the transition?"

"Damned difficult," said Phoebe frankly, "but it doesn't matter."

Christine Griffith, who had known poverty well enough to be frightened by it, looked down at the large white hands clasped quietly in her lap, and her lips moved a minute before she spoke. "But it mustn't be too difficult," she remarked at last, "or it can matter. . . . I have been very fond of Ted for a long time," she added as if irrelevantly; but Christine Griffith was never irrelevant.

"Yes, he needs more than I do," said Phoebe, bending her yellow head lower over the work. "What do you think of Ted?" she asked with a quaint simplicity which touched the older woman. Miss Griffith was silent a long time; then she answered with characteristic candor:

"This University does not often have a Ted, and when we do we are afraid of him. He mocks and wants to destroy all we have built up so patiently and stupidly

through many years. . . . We see in him glimpses of what we wanted to be. Yes! dear me, we worry about Ted because we think of him as a young self who must be saved from 'travelling farther from the East.' " Her broad forehead flushed unevenly with a rim of dark red. . . . A long, difficult speech for Miss Griffith. She broke off, murmuring absently,

"And nature still remembers
What was so fugitive."

She sighed, glanced at Phoebe and added in a brusque voice: "He should never have come here in the first place—he is dangerous to us. But we are far more dangerous to him."

Abruptly Miss Griffith rose, smoothing back the graying hair from her warm brow. "I hope I was not wrong in saying this. Goodbye. Come to see me."

When she had gone, Phoebe's head bent lower and lower until suddenly she buried her face in the pile of socks on the table.

IV

Ted wanted so many things, needed them as Phoebe had said. Beautiful old books, etchings, music, travel, companionship, excitement. . . . Without such nourishment he was morose, rebellious. Love had awakened him to all the further glamor of the world and then detained him in the little province of mid-Western college life. He hated the University because it conventionalized all the patterns of beauty. He found that other intelligent young instructors hated it too and secretly defied all its precepts of smugness and commerce. Older scholars like Gabler and Fannicott and Bellamy were wryly amused by it, but had come philosophically to accept the institution as an overgrown kindergarten which at least made

few pretenses of grappling with the higher learning; long ago they had locked themselves within the chaste towers of classicism, refusing to be disturbed by the petty burlesque of education going on below.

Ted was too young to be philosophical. He tried angrily to din new conceptions of life into the indifferent minds of his rhetoric students. Sometimes he wanted to pound their heads against the floor until at least a look of interest dawned in their eyes. He was a very bad teacher, being impatient. He battled his pupils with a young furious sarcasm and the dreary combat left him limp and wretched. The University expected him merely to teach freshmen how to spell, punctuate, construct a sentence tolerably, read with a mild comprehension of context and learn to express with fair literacy a few cheerful sentiments regarding Spring, How to Construct a Radio, Why I Believe in Prohibition, A Sunset, Our Need of a New Gymnasium, and My Vacation.

Ted foolishly struggled to show them the meaning as well as the uses of rhetoric. They glanced back at him imperviously when he read aloud lines that had power through grace or grandeur to move him almost to tears:

Spring is come home with her world-wandering feet,
And all things are made young with young desires;
And all for her is light increased
In yellow stars and yellow daffodils.

. . . What, they would have none of Francis Thompson? But surely, surely the eyes must quicken to the more passionate rhythms of Swinburne:

Thou seest how well the old loves sleep,
Each in a small sweet bed,
With flowers at foot and head,
Made out of griefs not grown enough to weep,
And joys so young their lips are hardly red,
And their hearts hardly leap.

But their faces were wooden; and his own face was white and bitter with the shame of shaking out a glory as fine-spun and dazzling as a silver-tinted cloud, and none but himself to be stricken by the splendor:

Sea-fruit that swings in the waves that hiss,
Drowned gold and purple and royal rings,
And all time past, was it all for this?
Times unforgotten and treasures of things?

. . . . .

The pulse of war and passion of wonder,
The heavens that murmur, the sounds that shine,
The stars that sing and the loves that thunder,
The music burning at heart like wine.

Oh, Phoebe, Phoebe! You and I turning away from the wooden faces and alien eyes . . . with clasped hands wandering together into a hidden coppice of the wet spring woods where the new fern fronds are lifting their heads like young nestlings from the brown mold and a blackbird is calling in the wild cherry boughs. . . . How can life keep us from this dear, secret place of sad rapture and fugitive wisdom?

V

There was one youth with pale red hair and round eyes—James McLaren, the president's nephew—who waited for Ted sometimes after class and talked about books as they walked across the campus. Often Ted took him to the room and lent him precious volumes . . . *La Bas* and *Jurgen* and the poems of John Donne and Swinburne and Rupert Brooke and Siegfried Sassoon and *A Shropshire Lad* and *Deirdre* and the forbidden *Petronius Arbiter*. Phoebe did not like this confident youngster who talked glibly of the Montmartre and Marcel

Proust and stared coldly at the water colors and Ted's linoleum cuts, and wanted lemon with his tea when lemons were sixty cents a dozen. But Ted said he was responsive and eager; Phoebe didn't like him, Ted said laughingly, because he was badly dressed and cared nothing about dancing.

"But I wish you had not lent him *La Bas* and *Petronius Arbiter,*" commented Miss Griffith thoughtfully, sipping her tea (with canned cream instead of lemon) after the youth had gone.

"You can borrow them next," Ted gibed at her, putting on his old khaki sweater.

"No; it was an indiscretion—"

"Christine Griffith, life is flat, stale and unprofitable enough without you croaking at me about discretion."

"Ah, well," she sighed—then abruptly, with a straight look into his tired young face: "Theodore . . . and Phoebe. Listen to me. You must go to Paris."

They talked for hours, forgetting their dinners, making lists of little places Miss Griffith knew where one could eat cheaply and drink good wine for a few francs. And so it was decided. They would save their money in a miserly fashion; be actual paupers now for the sake of a bright dream. The murmur of the Seine was in their ears . . . the ancient glamor of the Beaux Arts and the Student Quarter. Ted's French already impeccable would be of use to him as an English tutor. In the mornings Phoebe romantically imagined herself tripping through the narrow streets with the vegetables for the *pot au feu* that night, and a bunch of lilacs and bottles of white wine tucked in her little blue market basket. . . . Ted working at his canvases—Paris, a symbol to youth everywhere of escape.

Now as Miss Griffith and Phoebe talked excitedly he paced the room, his throat bare above the old sweater, his black hair rumpled upon his forehead, his eyes blazing with a vision. Unable to control himself, he cried in a loud voice,

Everyone suddenly burst out singing!
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and green fields; and on; and on;
And out of sight.

Then he stopped by the window, looking down at the dark quiet streets; his profile, somber and beautiful, was as young David's might have been when he touched his first harp; and it really seemed that he was hearing the sound of music.

VI

They were penurious even to the point of eating insufficient meals. Now no more luncheons at the little tea-room—Phoebe flew to the one-ring gas plate when she came from her eleven o'clock and made tea and warmed canned beans. They put a restraint upon their youth with a budget. Phoebe religiously entered every expenditure, even

Box safety matches..... .01

Ted gave up his painting—the materials were too expensive. Instead of buying books they read at the English seminar.

Phoebe's sisters in Pi Omega looked at her clothes and secretly called her "poor old Phoebe." She could never be dowdy, being fastidious, but in her shabby neatness looked oddly prim. Ted stopped going to his fraternity house; he felt ill at ease in that grand edifice—one of those stately buildings more palatial than most of its residents had ever known or would ever know again. He had never fulfilled his pledge of money toward the house. When he was asked to give something for the stadium

fund he burst into wild laughter which angered the solicitors. He became known as a moocher because on many occasions he shared liquor without buying any. The undergraduates disliked him and rapidly forgot his popularity as the editor of *The Lame Duck*.

It seemed to the faculty members that the Allisons were very commercial young people. They were obsessed by the thought of money and talked about it all the time. Some blamed Phoebe and some blamed Ted . . . and Christine valiantly quarreled with everybody who blamed either of them.

Once or twice Andy Protheroe came up to the little room and glanced about the four shabby walls in gentle perplexity. He looked at Phoebe sorrowfully, no doubt remembering the laughter and music that she once shared with him: Phoebe in the golden-rose dress, dancing gravely, tall and fair,—Phoebe, lovely and aloof with her mysterious charm. How had she changed? . . . And looking back at him as if he were a stranger she thought how gay and inconsequential and careless he was. Andy Protheroe! What did he know about these things that ached in her breast and blinded her and made her laughter brittle? But sometime he would know . . . all youth everywhere has to know sometime. . . .

VII

One morning Ted had a little card asking him to call at President McLaren's office. Phoebe was frightened, but Ted pretended to be merely annoyed. "This will cost us fifty cents," he grumbled. "Calling on him at four o'clock! That's the hour I work in the business office. Why couldn't the old bloke ask me some other time?"

President McLaren had achieved his present state of crisp efficiency through devious routes. As a boy in a small prairie town, the son of a Presbyterian minister,

he had hated the life around him and wondered at his father's stern religious fervor. Up in the moldy unused hay-loft he pored over the Jack Harkaway books and the Life of Napoleon and Ingersollia; he smoked a forbidden pipe which his father later destroyed as a vice of the devil. He also dreamed a bright dream—of going to Singapore. His reasons for wanting to go would be obscure except to the heart of youth. President McLaren could not tell you today why he had once dreamed of going to Singapore. . . . Some vague connection with a foolish notion of escape. But escape from what? What was it he had wanted to escape? . . .

He attended a small Presbyterian college; had an appointment there as an economics instructor; became an associate professor, married the daughter of the president. She was extremely virtuous and ambitious. She had money and an uncle who was a trustee of the State University. To please her McLaren gave up smoking and later justified his cowardice by believing that tobacco was vicious. People "expected big things of him." He tried never to disappoint them. In small scheming ways he carefully built up his career. He pledged himself to sobriety, punctuality and common sense. He was a professor, then a dean at the State University. But his wife told the flounder in the sea that she was not satisfied. Her husband must be president of the State University. For years he lived with his eyes glued on the presidency. It was a terrible strain. He could not think, do or say anything without considering first how it would affect his future position. He succeeded in thinking, doing, saying nothing that was not sensible; therefore he was finally President McLaren with his youth behind him and stiff laurels planted solidly on his baldish head. Slowly, bit by bit, his concessions had become his ideals. . . . Wouldn't it have been foolish to go to Singapore? Ha! Ha! What silly dreams befuddle youth!

VIII

As he walked into the heavily carpeted office with its great shining desk and gilt-framed pictures and pleasant Windsor chairs Ted's hands seemed suddenly large and red and he thrust them awkwardly into his pockets. President McLaren gave a brisk nod and like an automaton Ted sat down. A moment of low murmurs, then, while the president and his secretary conversed cheerfully about some papers, Ted stared at the pot of cyclamen in the window sill and quieted his nervousness by saying angrily to himself: "Hell! These aren't real Windsor chairs. They're only bad reproductions."

At last the secretary was gone and Horace McLaren fixed his sharp blue gaze upon Ted. There was a certain benevolent despotism about these blue eyes beneath overhanging gray brows which placed Ted as an unimportant, but perhaps slightly annoying bondservant. Catching this quality in the steady consideration Ted glowered back with a resentment sure to be read as extremely youthful. He recovered himself and managed an air of nonchalance.

And now the president placed two books on the desk, carefully levelling them edge to edge; he spoke with crisp precision: "In your honest opinion, Allison, are these books of the sort that should be taught in Rhetoric I?"

Ted glanced at the books and then away at the pot of cyclamen, rosy-lavender and mauve in the spring sunlight. *Spring is come home with her world-wandering feet, and all things are made young with young desires.* His thoughts were curiously idle. What would McLaren do if he didn't answer at all?

"Come, now," said the president a bit testily as one to whom time is an important commodity. (And quite right, thought Ted, he has a damned big business here under his fingers.)

"I don't teach them," he said, with unnecessary curtness.

McLaren frowned. "But you read them?"

"Certainly."

"This is pornography." The president tapped the crimson jacket of *La Bas.*

Again Ted was silent. He was thinking about James McLaren, the sneaking little pup! But maybe only a silly fool? And what did it matter? What did matter? . . . Phoebe did, and going to Paris. But you had to have money and if you got let out of the University that meant moving and expense and anxiety for Phoebe. . . . But one couldn't make concessions. One couldn't begin life with treason. He must be fierce and firm. Phoebe would not lightly forgive a compromise.

"Of course," said McLaren with new briskness, "it is not my business if you read these books. Your point of view is my business. Your encouraging students to read pornography is my business. Such an attitude strikes at the Roots of Civilization. A serious matter. I am making it my own personal concern." He adjusted his eyeglass and suddenly fixed Ted with what was meant to be an overwhelming and dynamic gaze. "This great State University," he said with an appropriate pause after the portentous syllables, "does not want teachers who put anything—*anything*—above ideals."

Ted moistened his lips. Now was his moment; he must ask what ideal was more valuable than the search for truth; demand how one man's ideals could become another's; insist that some meaning be injected into the empty word so that it ring with at least some honest significance. Then his mind wandered to the factitious thought that going to Paris might be an ideal. One shouldn't put anything—even truth—above ideals. . . . If a man got let out of the University it meant moving and expense. . . . But if he stayed it meant concessions and treason. All at once he felt languid and wanted to yawn. Looking down he saw with concern

that a new hole had come in one of his best tan socks.

"If you fail to agree with me that all art should, and can, be wholesome and further nobility of living—" the president stopped, slightly entangled by the modifying clause. "Do you agree with me," he began more fortunately, "that all art should, and can, be wholesome and further nobility of living?"

"Yes, sir," said Ted, "I do."

"You do?"

"Yes," said Ted. "I sincerely believe in the wholesomeness and nobility of all art. If I made a mistake—" he halted, almost shocked by his own airy glibness, "—a mistake in lending those books to one student, I am very sorry. They are deplorable books—I wish they had never been written. The world would be better off without them. I would be better off if I had never read them." He drew a deep breath and rose.

"Very well," said McLaren. He narrowed his eyes and looked at Ted with an odd expression of discomfiture. It might have been that at this moment (since spring was quivering golden in the window across the rosy-lavendar of cyclamen) he vaguely remembered once wanting to go to Singapore, even though he could not recall exactly why. "I am very glad to know this," said McLaren. "Good-day, Allison."

"Good-day," said Ted in a carefully respectful voice. As he left the room, he furiously and childishly banged the door. The shamed tears stood in his eyes, but he smiled, thinking, Anyway, they can't let me out of the University for banging a door.

Fourteenth Episode:
THE RABBIT IN THE HAT

From an Editorial in the Student Daily Newspaper:

> *It is indeed gratifying to reflect that the older nations of Europe are studying the educational systems of our state universities.*

XIV: *The Rabbit in the Hat*

FRANCE had heard of the Greatest State University. Every year a new French delegation came to America to examine the Greatest University—putting it to the monocle test and poking the campus here and there with Malacca canes to find out whether it really was great or just another vast hoax of American publicity. . . .

Monsieur Pauveraux of the Department of Modern Languages sat by his telephone all Friday evening. Knowing that the French delegation had arrived, he felt sure that the telephone would ring at any moment and he would be invited to show his distinguished countrymen over the campus on Saturday.

He was a small man with a wispy mustache pointing downward to a black string tie. He waited. . . . Once the telephone rang and somebody said, "That you, Totsy?" but hung up hastily on hearing Professor Pauveraux's eager Gallic voice. He sighed. The bell did not ring again. As he dejectedly prepared for bed he wondered with bitter jealousy who had been invited to show the Frenchmen over the campus this year.

Andy Protheroe gave orders that he was never to be called away from his meals by any telephone call not from a woman. He was engaged in so many undergraduate activities that almost any university project not connected with the Y. M. C. A. or the Halcyon House Doll Show necessitated a conference with him; he was forced to protect himself from continuous and overlapping telephone calls, especially at meal time, else he could not have

assimilated enough calories and vitamines to carry on the monstrous business of his college career.

"Protheroe," said the freshman who was answering the telephone during the dinner hour that Friday evening. He said it in a small, awed voice, for that was the way all A. O. G. freshmen spoke to Andy.

"Woman?" said Andy curtly. He disliked leaving his pineapple and cheese salad.

"I think so," said the freshman.

"You think so!" exclaimed Andy, prowling into the dark telephone booth and stumbling over a large and illiterate Airedale in the doorway.

He was not astonished at the freshman's uncertainty when a loud, hoarse, virile voice came gushing from the receiver. "Oh, Professor Pauveraux!" cried the voice. "How very *kind* of you! Isn't it most rude of me to disturb you!"

"Most," began Andy, but the voluminous voice swept his remark aside.

"Perhaps," said the voice, "you have not guessed who it is speaking? Mrs. Grant—Mrs. *Melville* Grant. But I must tell you my purpose in calling! I don't believe in telephoning *at all,* do you, unless one has a *purpose?* But to the point! The French delegation has arrived and wishes to start from the Auditorium tomorrow after the convocation on a short tour of the campus. Since you have done it on other occasions we wondered if you would be so *kind,* Professor Pauveraux, as to undertake the responsibility again this year? As Dean Grant says, we feel that you will know how to present our great institution in the *best* light to your fellow countrymen! Beg pardon? Oh, how *kind* of you!"

"Oui, oui," said Andy in his best classroom French. *"Oui, oui, oui, oui, oui.* And *il n'y a pas de quoi. Au revoir."* As the receiver clicked, *"Oo-la-la!"* he remarked airly to the transmitter.

Then he went back to the fraternity dining room and thoughtfully resumed his pineapple and cheese salad. As

he began on the second round of pineapple he said to Bill Lait on his right:

"D'ye happen to know where I can get hold of a frock coat and a pair of striped trousers?"

"Wha's idea?" muttered Bill out of the depths of a melancholy hang-over now three days old.

"And a gardenia," added Andy.

"You can rent a gardenia," said Bill, "at any hothouse."

"Sure. All right," said Andy. "Thanks, I will."

"Whose best man are you going to be?" asked Bill with feeble curiosity.

"It's not that," Andy replied. Over his face came the gentle, innocently amused expression which endeared him to women and alienated him from his instructors and relatives. "Tomorrow," he murmured, "I am going to show the French delegation about the campus, Bill."

II

At four o'clock Saturday afternoon the several members of the fraternal order of A. O. G. who happened to be in gaped amazedly at Andy. As Podhurst, the most literate brother, remarked, Andy looked "Oh, quite!"

But Brother Fatleigh, who was not given to subtleties of expression, observed that Andy looked more damned nutty than usual. He had abandoned his bagging twenty-inch trousers and garterless socks for tight gray stripes and hose which may or may not have been tethered beneath their concealing taupe spats. Further—and it was a sartorial touch disgusting to the mid-western mind—he carried a stick with careful jauntiness. The frock coat, the gardenia—all were assembled. Not aimlessly had Andy read *Vanity Fair* the night before.

True, it seemed a slightly incongruous spectacle when he climbed into his blue-green roadster and threw it into gear, but his outward nonchalance was superb as he drove down Fraternity Row. Inwardly he felt nervous

and slightly ridiculous, wondering what effervescence of spirit had propelled him into this nonsense. He hoped he would not encounter Dean Grant or Dean Abrams—both gentlemen who regarded him more in terms of probation than approbation, and justly.

At the Auditorium he was delighted to see the little group of aliens waiting in lonely patience on the marble steps. The convocation was over and the deans had gone about their golf or their speeches at Rotary clubs.

A short, rotund man with a red Vandyke beard cried explosively, "It is he! Monsieur Pauveraux!"

And the little group turned toward Andy with happy, childlike gratitude on their faces. Cordially Andy grasped the hands of the academicians—Monsieur Bouillon (very tall and swarthy), Monsieur Gité (wearing bone-rimmed glasses), and Monsieur de Quarille of the red Vandyke. It seemed that all spoke garrulous English, while only one had essayed a frock coat and this shabbier but better fitting than Andy's.

Then Andy saw the girl. She was standing aloof on a higher step looking very young and indifferent and bored, and she tapped the satin toe of one high-heeled slipper to convey the fact that American state universities did not interest her. Even the amethyst earrings, dangling enormously from under her tiny lilac hat, looked disdainful of all things collegiate, and her small, spoiled mouth with its amusingly short upper lip was puckered into a scornful bowknot. She was a girl petite and perfect in every curve and tint like a costly doll . . . and Andy wished despairingly that he were not supposed to be Professor Pauveraux. As he looked at her he understood why the males of the world give French women exaggerated admiration. For she was utterly feminine and exotic—a glamorous luxury designed to arouse the admiration of men.

"A French girl!" he told himself; and although he was a man grown very bold with women because of countless victories, he wondered fearfully if this sophisticated Pari-

sian child would ever be brought to look at him as countless other women had looked. He had but one short afternoon in which to try—and there was the stupid necessity of exhibiting the campus to these elderly educators!

As he was presented to her by her father, Monsieur de Quarille, Andy prayed to his pagan gods for technique and unsurpassed brilliance. But when she gave him limp fingers and glanced absently at one of his coat lapels he felt baffled, and blurted in his most anxious manner: "I hope you won't be bored with all this."

She nodded equivocally and somehow eluded his arm as they went down the steps.

"We wish," said her father earnestly, "to understand the meaning—the intent, I may say—of this huge institution. We should like to comprehend its atmosphere, its inner spirit, the heart which makes the organization beat, *n'est-ce pas?*"

"It is so," nodded the other dignified gentlemen gravely.

Andy pondered this remark a moment, frowned, and then smiled with inspired zeal. "I haven't much room in this bus," he said, "but if Monsieur Gité and Monsieur Bouillon will be so good—" he indicated the rumble seat "—it won't be bad once you get in, see?" They scrambled over the mudguard and into the rear aperture, looking very astonished. It occurred to Andy that with their heads sticking out they resembled turtles, rather.

He established Monsieur de Quarille in the front with the girl tucked in the middle. It was a satisfactory arrangement, for she was so close to him that Andy had only to turn his face a little to look directly into her eyes. Sometimes the scent she wore stole lightly to his nostrils, as the faint fragrance of apple blossoms comes now and then to an open casement in springtime. And smelling this vague perfume he began to think of splendid crimson moons and far-away roads and the clamorous music of

youthful romance, while his heart hammered tumultuously.

"As we survey the buildings," said Monsieur de Quarille complacently, "we wish to make notes on equipment, laboratory supplies, seminars—"

But the rakish car gave a terrific lurch and shot with rash speed across the campus so that the good academician clutched his hat and lapsed into breathless silence.

"Qu'est-ce que c'est que ca?" squeaked Monsieur Gité, waving his hands beseechingly at the chemistry building and the library, but the roadster bounded past so madly that the tall stone edifices were a dim blur.

"Tiens! Tiens!" moaned Monsieur Bouillon as he tried in vain to snatch a glimpse of University Hall.

From the corner of his eye Andy saw the girl lift her head with a look of surprise and interest; about her mouth a vagrant smile was beginning to play. "Thank God!" thought Andy. "She's a French flapper and likes speed." He pressed his foot more firmly on the accelerator.

Monsieur de Quarille gave a fatalistic sigh as the roadster sprinted gayly around a ten-ton truck, darted on two wheels into a side street and by a miracle avoided a street car.

Andy's smile was gentle and amused. "In a moment," he said, "we shall arrive in a district which embodies the meaning—the intent, I may say—of this huge institution. Here you will find the university's inner spirit, its atmosphere, the heart which makes the organism beat."

He allowed the car to slow down into a leisurely speed, and as if carelessly rested his arm behind the girl's shoulder while he gravely addressed her father.

"It may surprise you, sir, to learn that erudition is no longer quite *au fait* at the best American universities. Hence I shall not exhibit the classrooms, the instructors, the laboratories or any of that old rot. Those things are vanishing here in America along with the covered wagons, the Indians and pioneers. We have gone in for a new

educational policy based on rhythm and stadiums, football, fraternities and jazz."

As always when Andy was well launched on a piece of eloquence his eyes were very soft and dark, his voice low and persuasive. The French dignitaries nodded many times, looking attentive but mystified.

They turned into a broad avenue lined with great, luxurious houses of fantastic and imposing architecture.

"Here," said Andy, "is the heart of the university. This, gentlemen, is Fraternity Row."

III

He stopped the automobile and the three academicians peered at the view in silence as if they expected something dramatic to happen. On either side of the street the sleek fraternity houses seemed to shelter mysterious gaiety and portentous secrets. Surrounded by thick hedges and well-groomed shrubbery, they stood self-conscious and new, embodying the midwestern idea of aristocracy in their bigness and extravagance of design. They vied with each other in eccentricity—some flaunted glass windows and spires like adolescent cathedrals, some were fiercely Gothic, some were imbued with the British complex and sprawled in rough stone like gray tweeds, speaking in a newly acquired English accent. Yet, curiously, all were intensely American . . . all were slangy and gloriously vulgar with the joyous arrogance of moneyed youth.

Monsieur de Quarille gazed with deference at the display of bigness, sleekness and wealth. "And what," he said almost timidly, "goes on here, may I inquire?"

"Pleasure," said Andy. "Meals, poker, dances, initiations, bridge, loafing, or what have you."

Monsieur Gité drew out a notebook and made a few hasty notes. "The university sanctions these retreats?" he questioned excitedly.

"This *is* the university," said Andy with gentle firmness.

From a nearby house came the sudden surge of piano and saxophone. Vigorous cheers and clapping sounded from further down the avenue. It was Saturday afternoon and a tea dance at one of the most Gothic edifices was beginning. Suave, fresh-cheeked youths descended from a fleet of taxicabs and after them fluttered short, glittering skirts and vivid cloaks and the shining pulchritude of graceful legs in expensive silk stockings.

Imbued with the spirit of research the French scholars craned interestedly from the car.

The girl turned suddenly to Andy and cried, "I love it!"

Andy caught and held her glance with his dark, caressing eyes. Her lashes wavered and fell provokingly again, but a little sigh had escaped her red lips and her hands closed and unclosed restlessly on the beaded trifle that held her powder puff. He could smell the perfume she wore and there was the softness of her arm against his . . . they were both young and all the warm allurements of spring were troubling the romantic heart of April. . . .

From an open window a foolish melody called and beckoned with the insistent fingers of jazz—

O-o-o-oh, look at that baby!
O-o-o-oh, look at that baby doll!
I never knew they made them like that!

"The American jazz is so very wonderfully enchanting," she murmured, tapping her foot to the rhythm. She spoke English with a deliciously quaint accent suggesting a childish lisp. "At home we have one of the newest records for our gramophone—have you heard it? *Oui! Nous n'y en avons pas de bananes!*"

"I think," said Andy thoughtfully, "I may have heard it somewhere."

She laughed, showing small glistening teeth. "But a

professor! He would scarcely dance or care for the jazz?"

Andy flushed. He could think of no way to tell her what a marvelous dancer he was, and yet he most earnestly wished her to know of his talent.

But now Monsieur de Quarille drew back into the car and began speaking volubly. "It is most odd," he cried, "most *interessant!* I have never encountered so *exuberant* a form of education. Here the instinct for play is not sublimated into work, but on the contrary work is sublimated into play. Is it not so?"

Andy had no idea what the old chap meant, but he nodded profoundly. The gentlemen in the rumble seat were busy jotting down memoranda.

"I shall write an essay about this most modern theory," announced Monsieur de Quarille. "And I shall send you a copy of it, Professor Pauveraux. I intend to quote you if you have no objections?"

"None whatever," said Andy. He could imagine Professor Pauveraux's consternation when he read certain ribald remarks about rhythm and jazz and the passing of erudition. "Don't forget," he added boyishly, "to sling some hot stuff about the wildness of the younger generation. No article can get by these days without mentioning it. And don't soft-pedal any of the bigness of the university—that's what we go in here for, sir—bigness and speed. We get 'em young, teach 'em nothing and graduate 'em fast."

Monsieur Gité polished his bone-rimmed glasses and nodded enthusiastically.

"The university," continued Andy, growing more inspired, "is bounded on all sides by money; and football and publicity are its chief occupations." A smile lurked in one corner of his mouth as he contemplated the avenue. "And I hope you'll describe Fraternity Row as the center of the whole gaudy whirlpool. It isn't merely a street or a district, see? It's a big, overgrown playground trying to look Gothic. It's a bam-bam-bammy

shore all dressed up in Greek letters. It's jazz done in architecture. . . . It's a good-time-was-had-by-all sort of a place—Fraternity Row—sure! It's a riot of youth and gayety and glamor. And that's why I say it *is* the university. Because a state university is a strenuous joint where education is taken fast like setting-up exercise, and even the classics have learned to Charleston."

"Mon Dieu!" cried Monsieur de Quarille in amazement.

Monsieur Bouillon looked up from his rapid note taking to ask in the manner of a reporter interviewing an authority: "How, then, do you regard the dead languages?"

"As innocent pastimes," replied Andy cheerfully. "After all, dead languages tell no tales."

The educators laughed enormously at this casual jest. It was obvious that they held Monsieur Pauveraux very highly, finding him to be a great wit, a man of the world and a scholar.

Andy was much more interested in discovering what the girl had found him to be . . . but she was very clever and very coy and every time he glanced at her, she veiled inscrutable secrets with lowered lashes.

As the car sped at last on its way down Fraternity Row he noticed that she watched the big houses with eager interest as they passed, and her parted lips and bright eyes were so lovely that Andy's vulnerable heart seemed bruised against the sharpness of such beauty. Again he thought of splendid moons and far-away roads where the spring wind lies cool and sweet against the face. . . . He wondered how he could bear the pain of wanting to kiss her small, spoiled mouth. . . .

But he said with easy nonchalance to her father: "Now you must see the next most important thing—our great football stadium."

IV

As they walked back to the roadster after viewing the vast amphitheater, the Frenchmen were silent with astonishment; and Monsieur de Quarille thought of still another essay he would write concerning the instinct of play and its psychological relation to commerce. The taciturn Bouillon and the more volatile Gité had covered many pages of their notebooks with statistics.

But Andy's explanations had been growing more and more perfunctory and mechanical; he was, in fact, able to think of nothing else but the girl and how he could contrive to see her alone. He had heard so much about the careful chaperonage of French girls that no plan came into his head which seemed feasible. He noticed that she, too, was detached and quiet, and once when their eyes met he thought hers lingered with an entrancing warmth in their violet-gray depths.

Finally he announced he would drive them all to the campus where he would leave them to view the more minor aspects of college life. At random he parked his car near the chemistry building and strolled with them over to that ill-smelling building of gaseous substances and reeking test tubes. He thought despairingly that if no inspiration occurred to him he would have to say goodbye to her and go away defeated.

But they were no sooner inside one of the nauseating laboratories than the girl clapped her hands over her nose with a little shriek and said that she felt very faint.

"I cannot endure these dreadful smells," she protested from behind her lacy handkerchief.

Monsieur de Quarille looked up from the tanks and coils and Bunsen burners at which he was peering like a preoccupied child. *"Venez! Venez!"* he sputtered. "It is most important for us to view this equipment, Simone. Hold your handkerchief over your nose like a good child and have patience."

"No, I am positively going out of this wretched place," she cried wilfully. "And perhaps Professor Pauveraux will be so kind as to drive me to the home of Madame Grant."

"Bien," said her father with a shrug and he turned to Andy. "We cannot thank you enough, Professor, for your courtesy and good nature. We have been overwhelmed, I assure you, by your interesting and illuminating presentation of the university! We heartily endorse all your educational theories and hope to introduce many of them abroad by means of essays and lectures. At dinner this evening we shall tell Dean Grant of your goodness."

Bouillon and Gité added many long and courteous speeches of farewell, and as they wrung his hand, Andy said modestly, "I have merely tried to present our institution in the best light."

But he wondered whether Dean Grant would agree that this had been accomplished.

Outside with the girl, he drew a long quivering breath of relief and hurried her off to the car in dread lest she should be called back for some reason. As she snuggled down into the low seat she looked up like a pleased kitten and said: "On our way could we not drive past that Fraternity Row again? It is so enchanting!"

"Yes, Simone," he said. "May I call you Simone? We have such a little while, you know, and it would be fun to pretend that we had always known each other. Shall we? And will you call me Andy?"

She flashed a coquette's glance of mockery at him. "To call a professor Andée!" she laughed. "Surely it would be very bold of me!"

"Listen, Simone," he said hastily, "that professor stuff is all rot—I am surprised that you believed it a minute. I'm a student, a very bad student, and my parents are wondering why I never finish college. They expect me to pop up any day now, magically educated. Me," he murmured pensively, "I'm the rabbit in the hat. The

hat's the university . . . but there doesn't seem to be any magician clever enough to haul me out by the ears."

The faint fragrance of April lay on the warm dusk like a scented flower; and along Fraternity Row the plaintive sound of guitars and banjos was the serenade of youth to an unknown but haunting beauty. Andy stopped by the A. O. G. house and took Simone up to the deserted veranda where they sat in the porch swing. In silence they brooded a moment on the spring loveliness of the avenue, watching the cars speed to and fro, and the blurred yellow lights beginning to glow in scattered windows.

Then they looked into each other's eyes and a strange sense of fear and ecstacy seemed to quiver between them.

"Simone!" he whispered, his hand relentlessly imprisoning both of hers. "I have never known anybody like you! How can you be so wonderful?"

"I do it easily," she said, trying to laugh.

"But I love your name. . . . I love your dear little mouth. . . . And your immense earrings! . . . And your funny snub-nose slippers . . ."

"They are very nice slippers, I think," she said gravely, surveying them.

"And you . . . I love you, Simone."

Suddenly she withdrew her hands. They had grown quite cold. "But that is forbidden. . . . It is only a few hours that you have known me."

"Oh, Lord!" he cried fiercely. "What does that matter? You've got to listen to me—let me make love to you. . . . Don't you understand? I feel as if I had been smashed all to pieces!"

"Smashed?"

"Smashed. You've done it. I feel as if you had stamped on me—on my heart—with your sharp little heels . . . and all that old rot."

In the moment of silence a Victrola inside the house began to play. The song they had heard that afternoon —foolish and gay and trembling with syncopation:

O-o-o-oh, look at that baby!
O-o-o-oh, look at that baby doll!
I never knew they made them like that!

Andy sprang up and drew her into his arms. Their feet moved slowly, easily, with tiny subtleties of rhythm and intricate patterings, to the broken harmony of the jazz. It seemed to him somehow strange and delightful that her head did not reach his shoulders. . . . He bent down and rested his cheek against hers.

The music went on but their feet were still. As he felt the warm velvet of her face his heart beat violently. Again the curious sense of fear troubled him and some inner wisdom seemed to struggle against his emotion. But he could not pause to listen to the dictates of his mind . . . he found her soft, spoiled mouth and there his lips clung.

V

Drawing away from him she patted her hat straight and tucked a curl up under it before she spoke. "But that also is wrong," she said slowly, "unless—one is to be married . . ."

Andy's thoughts whirled dizzily. He heard his own voice as if it were far off and detached:

"Well, why not, Simone? You will marry me, won't you?"

And immediately after, his mind grew clear, and he realized what he had said. He had made love to many women, but never before had he mentioned marriage to one. It seemed unbelievable that those words had really passed his lips. Had he made a fool of himself? Or—had Simone made a fool of him? French girls! They were superbly clever. Was there something cold and calculating in that small, soft face with its spoiled mouth and wilful chin? He tried to look into her eyes, but they were veiled by black drooping lashes.

"It must be that you are joking," she demurred, twisting her handkerchief into a little ball.

He had an opportunity now to say that he had spoken in fun—but Andy was hopelessly courteous, with an extravagant, ingrown chivalry. "I was terribly in earnest," he said, and his face flushed a hot crimson.

She was close to him, nestling as if unconsciously against his arm. "But you would not care to leave your own country," she murmured. "And I could not, of a certainty, leave Paris, for there my father is a member *de l'Academie* and also has a *fabrique de chemises—*"

"A which?" said Andy, grinning.

"A factory to make shirts—not what you think," she said with a merry laugh. "And then there is our villa at Menton . . . but that he has promised to give me when I marry." She twisted the top button of Andy's coat playfully. "Oh, *mon petit!*" she breathed. "Your face is so wonderfully handsome—I felt shy from the moment I saw it."

It seemed to Andy that American girls were bungling amateurs when it came to the real art of coquetry. He himself felt clumsy and unsubtle in her presence.

"But we are leaving on the evening train tonight," she continued. "Would it not be possible for you to take the same train, as if by accident? We go to Chi-cago and then New York. And, perhaps in New York I might know my own mind so that you could sail with us if my father thought the—arrangements suitable?"

Suddenly Andy wondered. After all, why not? He drew out a cigarette and walked to the end of the veranda as if to get the match box lying on the porch swing. If she would only give him a little time to think! Lighting his cigarette, he conjured a rapid vision of what the future with her might mean.

A villa at Menton. Vague pictures of plane trees, gnarled olives and a sun-drenched Mediterranean shore leaped to his mind. Maybe Deauville during a few enchanting and expensive summer weeks. Then the *fab-*

rique de chemises in Paris . . . a tour of inspection now and then . . . and maybe he, too, could in time become a member *de l'Academie.* (He almost smiled at the thought of Dean Grant's and Dean Abrams' consternation at the news of his election—it would be worth some research for that alone.) After all, wasn't this the sort of end he had always planned for his college career—something exciting and dramatic, no stuffy business of starting at the bottom of the ladder as a bond salesman? And the girl. Simone! Simone! Simone, radiant and frivolous, by his side on Parisian boulevards, himself in a frock coat every afternoon with a gardenia always in his lapel. . . .

How stunned and envious the A. O. G. brothers would be when they heard of his latest escapade! The college newspaper would run at least a column about it. Somebody else would have to be found to lead the spring prom.

Yet—was there, or was there not something cold and calculating in that small, soft face?

Ruthlessly he thrust his mid-western caution into the back of his mind. He strode across the porch.

"Simone," he said breathlessly, "kiss me."

She stood on tiptoe. . . . And after that it was so easy to say: "Simone, I will be on the evening train tonight. Are you glad I'm coming?"

Her laugh was joyous. *"Mon petit!"*

VI

There was a dance at the A. O. G. house that evening. The gayety of unrestrained jazz swept through the big living room and surged like a primordial chant through the open casement windows. Dim lights were reflected in the shining floors; and among the shadowy reflections the tireless feet of youth wove a sinuous pattern to the strident rhythm.

Beside the huge crimson punch bowl Brother Fatleigh

hovered, a beatific smile wreathing his chubby features. In the chaperons' corner Dean Agnes Watson was talking to Bill Lait, who listened with a desperate expression of interest frozen solidly on his ugly, good-humored face. In the hall young Podhurst stood waiting nervously for a co-ed who had discovered that her complexion needed elaborate redecorating.

Andy Protheroe came slowly down the broad staircase. He was dressed in street clothes and he carried a bulging pigskin suitcase, a golf bag and a light top coat.

"Why, Andy Protheroe!" cried the co-ed, lowering her monstrous powder puff so that her face was visible. "What's the heavy idea?"

Andy paused. He glanced into the living room at the familiar scene—the punch bowl, the chaperons, the ceaseless, dancing feet. He was leaving all this irrevocably behind.

"Awfully good jazz tonight," he commented, shifting the golf bag to his other hand. He looked at the girl. Her face appeared to him surprisingly fresh and round-cheeked and candid. Nice kid. Nice jazz. A rather slick party.

"Come and dance," she begged. "You said you'd teach me the Charleston. Didn't he, Poddy? He did. And now he's crashing off somewhere and I think it's absolutely vile of him."

"Listen, Mildred," he said. "I can't, see? Some other time, sure, your papa Andy will teach you the trickiest steps he knows. . . . But not right now."

"Yes, right now," she insisted. "Listen—they're playing *Oh, look at that baby!* and you know it's simply marvelous for the Charleston."

Andy listened. He put down his suitcase, his golf sticks and meticulously folded his topcoat over them.

Suddenly his feet began to do an incredible, grotesque, inspired shuffle to the slow insinuation of the jazz. "I never *knew* they made them like *that!*" he sang softly and he snapped his fingers with meditative enjoyment.

The girl ran into his arms and together they shuffled and bounded with a look of astonished delight on their faces.

The tall clock in the corner struck nine. The train to Chicago left at nine-five.

"I'm a fool," whispered Andy.

"Why?" said the girl.

"Oh, nothing," he answered. "Let's dance out on the porch."

They danced on the broad veranda. In front of the A. O. G. house a waiting taxicab shuddered and throbbed, but no fare entered it. Andy did not look at the taxicab. He looked down Fraternity Row—avenue of flaring lights and flashing cars and youth and gaiety and glamor. He seemed to see it for the first time. He understood it. He was a part of it.

What good were Paris and Deauville and Menton if a man were homesick all the time for Fraternity Row?

And the girl in his arms was utterly American—unsubtle and candid and humorous. He was not afraid of her. He knew exactly what she would always do and say.

She looked up at him now and asked with frank curiosity: "Where on earth were you going with that bag anyhow, you dumb bunny?"

Andy stopped his dancing and stroked an imaginary French goatee.

"Ah, madame!" he lisped. "Zat—*zat* ees Ed Pinaud's secret!"

Fifteenth Episode:
CITY OF FIREFLIES

From the Catalogue of the State University:

> *Students who fail to maintain the scholastic rank required by the University are liable to discipline, ranging from admonition to separation from the University.*

XV: *City of Fireflies*

SOPHOMORES who studied the curriculum of the State University to find studies which would not interfere with more important activities were warned by their elders: "Keep away from young Bowden. Looks easy, but he'd just as soon flunk you as eat. No mercy on you if you cut class or skip a quiz."

Thus, and sadly, was Bowden catalogued in the unwritten files of a student body which only the year before had madly paid homage to him on the football field. "Touchdown—Bowden! Touchdown—*Bowden!*" The echoes of those frantic chants might almost be heard still. But now seniors shook their heads mournfully. The inexplicable change which—presto!—had come over Bowden since his graduation last June. . . .

"Who would have thought," remarked Andy Protheroe, "that a sheepskin could turn anybody into a wolf so quickly? It makes me shudder to think that I, too, may graduate some day."

Every other instructor on the campus had his little weakness but not this mild, serious youth of twenty-three who taught Logic 1. The very first semester he had unemotionally given an "E" to the prettiest pledge in his class, and he had shown no hesitation about flunking Beef Corey, one of the best guards the school ever turned out, during the critical period of the football season.

There was nothing in Bowden's appearance to warn the crowd of eager, trusting youths who poured into his classroom that first morning in the fond expectation that the course would be soft. At the desk sat a tall, athletic

young man with exceedingly fresh cheeks who looked the fewness of his years in spite of a timid blur of mustache sprouted during the summer vacation. The same Bowden who in his quiet, unpretending way had been one of the best all-around men of the school—class offices, football, amateur dramatics, Phi Beta Kappa, glee club, debating—with a list of activities after his name in the year book which read like a directory of university honors. It had been no surprise when he followed in the footsteps of his father, old Professor Bowden, beloved of memory, and became an instructor. The student body remembered the ancient tradition that nobody had ever been known to flunk one of old Professor Bowden's Shakespeare courses, and blandly, mistakenly the student body put its faith in young Bowden. Like father, like son, said the student body hopefully—and the resulting carnage was frightful.

By the mid-semester examinations the class had shrunk dismally; after the exams still others dropped into the yawning abyss of failure, and the end was not in sight. At the close of the semester a few grinds managed to escape with grades to write home about, but the tattered remnant was on the scholastic casualty list. All because of this earnest young man who sat at his desk looking uncomfortable and stammering slightly as he gave out his terrific lesson assignments.

"Avoid him as you would the measles!" two doleful Pi Kappa Alphas advised Georgia Carewe on the first morning of second semester registration. "Register early and get into old Phillips' logic class or you're sunk."

Old Phillips, who glared and stormed and denounced —and then at the end of the year passed anybody who knew the difference between a syllogism and a dish of prunes! This semester old Phillips' classroom was mobbed, but an unhappy few who could not gain admission had to take logic under Bowden . . . a handful in contrast to the legion which had invaded the room last semester. Among the handful was Georgia Carewe. Bowden recognized her as she carelessly dropped into a

seat in front of his desk, for everybody knew her clever drawings in *The Lame Duck*.

He knew her reputation for indifferent scholarship, too, and was surprised to find her a fair student, at least until the mid-semester examinations in March. But when the prom season was in full sway she cut Bowden's class as impartially as any other, and she paid no more attention to his weighty lesson assignments. One day toward the end of the semester she received a notice from the Dean of Women of a condition in Logic 1.

This would not in itself have been greatly annoying except that she had conditions in several other subjects. But she had been in such danger before and escaped blithely, so one May afternoon when Spring lay on the campus like a first shy caress, she called at Bowden's office.

II

He was at the desk when she knocked but he was not correcting the papers before him. An hour ago his eyes had wandered out of the window to a campus which was aflame this afternoon with all the color and extravagance youth could bring to it. He started sheepishly as the light rap broke into his solitude. And in spite of himself he flushed and stammered slightly at the door, for it happened that he had been watching her bantering progress across the campus with three men. It took him but a moment to assume the unnatural, topheavy dignity behind which his youth had crouched this last year.

"Please have a seat, Miss Carewe," he said in his stiffest, most forbidding tones. He looked harassed and worried, for he had caught the passing gleam of amusement in her eyes.

She was perhaps two years younger than himself, and half as large. A small thistledown of a girl who for three years had scarcely touched the erudition of the State University in her light dance from prom to prom, from

date to date. A girl whose lively blue eyes would never be troubled by vague rumors of knowledge, and whose lips were poised for folly.

She did not make the mistake of calling him "Professor" Bowden, thus calling attention to the fact that he was a green instructor at $1,400 a year—a mistake common to novices. Nor did she open her eyes wide and frightened and appealing, an error which most pretty girls added to the errors they had already made in Logic 1. In a manner too trustful and genuine to be doubted, she seemed from the start to take it for granted that he would overlook her glaring omissions in his course.

"—and I'd forgotten all about those overdue exercises," she rambled on confidingly, "until I got that notice from Dean Watson. So I dropped in to tell you that I'll turn them in soon. At the next class period, if I have time."

If she had time! Bowden remembered her flippant cartoons of campus celebrities in *The Lame Duck* and he suspected a touch of mockery behind the naivete of her gaze. All year he had leaned backward in his fear that these former classmates of his might take advantage of his youth and inexperience; now he put on his sternest, most aloof air.

"Of course you know that the exercises are weeks overdue?"

"Of course," she agreed brightly.

"They should have been prepared with care—"

"Oh, they *should*." She was almost fervent.

He glanced at her with open suspicion, but she seemed only eager and sympathetic.

His fair face flushed, his youthful eyes perturbed, he groped for more dignity. "And I daresay, Miss Carewe, you know what the university regulations prescribe in such—such omissions?"

"Yes, I know. They're awfully strict. Too strict, really, don't you think?"

"No—" Caught off balance, young Bowden stam-

mered helplessly. Here she was questioning him and he had started to discuss the university regulations with an undergraduate! After a moment's hesitation he resumed doggedly, speaking as to a child, beginning again at the beginning. "At the latest, the exercises should have been on my desk Wednesday. Since they were not, my only course was too report you to your dean."

"But even if I'd had them done I couldn't have handed them in *Wednesday*—I wasn't at class that day," she explained brightly.

"Wednesday," he said dryly, without so much as consulting his records, "was the fourth time you have cut class this semester."

"The fourth?" She seemed interested in these statistics. "I had thought it was only three times, but I'm sure you're right, Mr. Bowden."

Her young, careless gaiety filled the empty classroom and made him feel old and worn in spite of his twenty-three years. He could not look anywhere, it seemed, without meeting her eyes.

Far away the sound of shouted song on Fraternity Row drifted up to the silent room. Inside the building somewhere there was the monotonous swish, thump, of a janitor's broom. Bowden nervously walked to the door and snapped on the lights, although it was not yet dusk. He walked back, sat down and moved his desk-blotter a careful two inches to the right.

"Did you ever," she asked suddenly, "see a city of fireflies?"

"A—what?" In his amazement young Bowden forgot to be dignified.

"A city of fireflies. I have."

Her laughter rang in his ears—she was enjoying his stupid surprise and in spite of himself he was showing his interest. In spite of himself he asked, "You mean really a—"

"Really a city of fireflies. Last Spring I saw it for the first time, just before the summer vacation." Her

face was so vivid that Bowden could not help smiling back at her. "You know, I had gone to a dance at the Delt house that evening. And afterward I went riding with Andy Protheroe. He's an A. O. G.," she added irrelevantly, seemed to think that Bowden would be concerned with this detail. "And when we got out near the Country Club there it was—a city of fireflies. Through the trees you could see them—millions and millions and millions and *millions* of fireflies! A city bigger than—than Babylon or Troy ever dared to be—and more exotic—and more gay."

She stopped excitedly. "Wasn't that wonderful?"

"It was," Bowden agreed, for she had carried him with her on the wings of her swift drama.

"I've never seen it again—and I don't know how many times I've looked in that same place."

Her smile was friendly as she walked toward the door. With a crash Bowden came back to earth. What had all this talk about fireflies to do with a condition in Logic 1? But she anticipated his next question, her eyes dancing.

"You see, I had saved Saturday evening to make up those logic exercises. Turned down two—no, *three* dates, one a prom date, too. Then just as I began studying, Andy called up and wanted me to go riding. I thought about those fireflies again and wondered if they'd be there, but they weren't. Andy said it was too early for fireflies, maybe. But tonight I'll have some time and it will be all right, won't it, Mr. Bowden, if I do some of those exercises tonight and hand them in at the next class?"

For one fatal second her reasonable, trusting air was convincing. By some necromancy of look and smile she made absurdity seem to justify failure in Logic 1. To have denied her would have been denial of youth and light and laughter. Before Bowden had time to think, he was awkwardly telling her it would be all right.

III

All year freshmen girls had fancied themselves mildly in love with Bowden. Ingenuous little creatures still wearing high school graduation rings fondly dreamed of a time when his aloofness would melt before soft, assuring glances. It would have been such a triumph—the capitulation of a new faculty man—almost as flattering as a junior prom date with a football captain. It would have meant nothing less than pulling a god down from the high seat of the immortals.

But all year Bowden had gone his way unseeing. If he appeared at a fraternity hop he was there as a chaperon politely escorting Miss Agnes Watson, Dean of Women, or Miss Christine Griffith, of the Department of English. He sat in the chaperon's corner looking wistfully incongruous as he took part in the careful, reserved conversation which barely concealed the chaperons' boredom at the antics of the dancers and the jazz. Even as an undergraduate the few dates his far-flung activities allowed him were always with frumps assigned him by the upperclassmen of his fraternity. He had been too busy to notice such a mere detail as three thousand co-eds passing him daily on the campus.

Until this evening. Now at least he was irritated. As he went down the rickety steps of University Hall half an hour after Georgia Carewe's departure he was assuring himself that he was a callow ass if there ever was one. He had flunked more than one tearful co-ed for less cause and he had let Georgia Carewe off entirely because she told him a silly story about fireflies!

Passing down Fraternity Row, it seemed to him that the groups of students lounging about the Kappa Sig porch were regarding him with new curiosity amounting to amusement. He stiffened, nodded briefly, and went on self-consciously trying to tell himself he had been mistaken. But when he arrived at the Faculty Club for din-

ner there was no mistaking the glance of appreciation old Doctor Knowles shot him in the checkroom.

A dozen smiles met him in the large dining hall. And on his table he found the cause of it all—a copy of *The Lame Duck* fresh from the press, opened to a full page caricature of—of himself. There was no mistaking it; and young Bowden had for a moment that panicky feeling a man has when for the first time he sees his features made ridiculous in black and white. His ears burned as he heard chuckles from the tables about him.

Old Doctor Knowles was afterward heard to say that it was one of the few pieces of wit ever published in *The Lame Duck* which did not have to do with legs or liquor. It showed Bowden as a babe in the cradle—the same premature dignity, the same stern aloofness, the same air of inhuman reticence.

In front of the cradle were grouped as if in a classroom the respectful parents, the doctor and nurse, all studying Logic 1 under the prodigy. Every one of Bowden's stiff mannerisms was exaggerated in proportion to bring out the ridiculous. And yet it was not a savage caricature; it was gay, rollicking, friendly, and it had restraint rare in student humor directed at the faculty.

At the bottom was a signature in bold pen strokes—Georgia Carewe.

Now Bowden remembered how intently she had been watching him in class one day a few weeks ago . . . how absorbed for once she had seemed in her notes. All the time she was drawing this caricature—making fun of him.

He was suddenly hot and furious, but with a tremendous effort he smiled as if he, too, appreciated the thing. He tried to assume a worldly, amused, sophisticated pose.

Sampson, one of the young instructors of the German Department, was crossing the room toward him, and Bowden felt that he had to keep on smiling like an idiot in order to show these other idiots that he had a sense of humor.

"Speech! Speech!" called Sampson in cheerful tones which could have been heard on the third floor.

He drew a chair up to the table while Bowden inwardly writhed. Sampson was one of these young instructors always lolling about fraternity porches with the undergraduates—the good fellow type. He exalted the familiarity which Bowden had always scrupulously avoided.

"Quite unique, I thought," Sampson said as he lit his pipe and settled himself for a long, comfortable chat. "I tell you, that girl is *good.* Just this afternoon I dropped in at the Sig Chi house and there she was on the porch with a burlap bag tied around her shoulders and cigarette ashes scattered over it.

" 'I'm in sackcloth and ashes,' she said, 'because I'm behind in three of my courses and I'll flunk unless the profs show me a little mercy instead of justice.'

"There in front of her was Red Enright dressed in a sheet and supposed to be supplicating Buddha for her deliverance. Two or three other fellows were burning candles and incense. Yes, she's *good,* that girl. Last I saw of her, she was on her way to U Hall to see the instructors. And I'll bet a dollar they let her off easy, too."

Bowden finished his meal only because Sampson was looking at him, and most of the time he was considering the effect of a charge of dynamite set off under Sampson's chair.

It was dark when he passed Fraternity Row on the way back to his room. From the dark shadows of the Psi Upsilon back yard came a mighty burst of song, one barytone and at least a dozen dubious tenors:

Carry me ba-ack to old Vir-gin-ia,
Down-n where the honeysuckles grow-ow-w-w——

Close harmony! That was what the fraternity men called it. The unmusical hankering of males for Spring. Groping in the darkness. . . . But Bowden had been too busy for close harmony during his undergraduate days.

He had been an all-around man, an athlete, a scholar, a chairman of committees, a president of organizations, an earnest worker. He had never known he had missed gaiety—he had never even known what gaiety was.

Now it pursued him . . . accused him. A girl's laugh from the Delta Gamma house across the street, a laugh flung carelessly into the night, a laugh forgetful of everything but Spring and youth and the earth.

They were having a dance at the Alpha Chi Omega house and Bowden looked into the windows as he passed. His hurt eyes found her among the rest of them—Georgia Carewe dancing with Andy Protheroe. Her head was tilted until her throat gleamed white an instant, her short yellow hair curling like the petals of a jonquil. Her slim body sang with the joy of dancing and at this moment Bowden did not believe she would ever die. She was too young, too warm, too alive.

When she was lost to him among the other dancers he went on down the street with tired step.

IV

Old Doctor Knowles met Bowden in the lobby of the Faculty Club the next morning. "Regrettable," grumbled old Doctor Knowles, "regrettable."

At a gulp Bowden's eyes took in the headlines on the front page of the student daily newspaper: "Board OF CENSORS FOR THE LAME DUCK?—Co-ed Artist on Carpet for Cartoon of Faculty Member."

"Yes!" said old Doctor Knowles. He glared accusingly as if Bowden were to blame. "The first time in my knowledge that *they*——" he waved in the general direction of the Administration Building as if to include in his gesture all the powers in control of the University—"that *they* have ever interfered with the students' right to criticize the faculty. And a damned blunder it is, too.

"What would your father think if he were still on the

faculty? I ask you——" he was as vehement for the liberties as a member of the Boston Tea Party—"how will the other universities regard such nonsense?"

He stamped out of the door still grumbling.

In the dining room were little knots of instructors discussing the happening over their newspapers and coffee. They displayed none of old Knowles' crusty wrath, but in a more reserved manner they were agreed that censorship of *The Lame Duck* would be a reflection on their sense of values. Made them seem a group of doddering, mildewed old fellows who couldn't take a joke.

"I have no doubt," said Dean Fannicott wryly, "that the public will be all the more sure now that we are absent-minded ancients with square spectacles and green umbrellas."

The various groups nodded at Bowden when he came in, but it was plain to him that, humanly enough, they connected him with the unpleasant incident. And, humanly enough, he was quick to resent the injustice. He stiffened and ate his breakfast in total disregard of his fellow instructors, thereby doing all he could to support their vague suspicions.

If the attitude of the faculty was somewhat unfair to Bowden, the reaction of the student body was downright and hostile. Already he had made himself unpopular among the undergraduates and this morning as he walked down Fraternity Row he was met with vast waves of intolerance. It took no imagination to guess the cause—every student on the campus had looked once at the newspaper and leaped to the conclusion that Bowden had complained about the caricature.

On the porch of the A. T. O. house was gathered a knot of young crusaders for liberty who regarded him in black silence as he passed. Several girls on their way back from eight o'clocks gave him cold looks. Here in the haunts of last night's newly discovered gaiety Bowden was nothing less than a monster—a humorless tyrant who conspired with the deans to deny freedom of the press.

There may have been undergraduates who felt reasonable doubts as to Bowden's guilt, but when they saw his tight lips, set jaw and pale face, all such doubts were removed. Never was his aloofness more provoking! Without looking to right or left he went on down the street and nobody could have guessed that his eyes smarted dangerously.

In his morning mail he found a note from the Dean of Women asking him to appear at Room 103, Administration Building, at eight that evening. The note went on in the vague English used by deans to hint that certain changes of policy might be found desirable in the student publication known as *The Lame Duck*—that in view of recent incidents a meeting of the Board of Student Publications had been called . . . Bowden angrily tore the note in half and threw it in the waste basket.

Martyrdom was never meant for young men under thirty, and by the time the class in Logic 1 began, Bowden was in no mood for trifling. His first victim was the pop-eyed Mr. Novak, who was unfortunate enough to enter just seven minutes after roll call.

"Leave the classroom," said Bowden succinctly, more because Mr. Novak was pop-eyed than because he was late. It only pleased him to think that he might have exceeded his authority.

The members of the Logic 1 class glanced at each other in righteous indignation the moment Bowden turned to the blackboard. For all of them except the grinds it was a dark hour . . . Bowden's class record was filled with vicious pencil marks denoting low grades. When the bell rang, the class filed out in gloomy silence to bear further proofs of his tyranny to the campus.

Georgia Carewe had not been present. Nor had the overdue exercises been handed in as she promised. Without hesitation Bowden made out a report to the Dean of Women announcing that Miss Carewe had been dropped from Logic 1.

V

In Room 103 of the Administration Building at 8:10 that evening were gathered Dean Agnes Watson, Dr. Harry Abrams, Dean of Men, and Miss Christine Griffith, of the Department of English. Several uncomfortable students completed the roster of the Board of Student Publications. Across the highly varnished table sat Bowden, looking miserable and feeling miserable.

Since 7:40 o'clock the deans and Miss Griffith had been whiling away the time in small talk about the relation of Gulick's law, if any, to the Malthusian Theory. But as the hour for the meeting passed, Dean Agnes Watson was seen to grow slightly restless; she glanced at the huge clock on the wall and smoothed out a fold of the ample skirt she always wore as an object-lesson for saner co-ed fashions. At the same time Miss Griffith passed her broad, capable hand over her broad, capable brow and smiled absently. Dean Abrams tapped the arm of his chair. Bowden coughed unhappily. Conversation lagged.

"I wonder," Miss Watson said at last in her well-modulated voice, "where Miss Carewe is?"

"She isn't here yet," one of the undergraduates offered hopefully.

"Yes! Yes!" snapped Dean Abrams, glaring at the undergraduate.

"It is possible," said Dr. Christine Griffith after the mature deliberation she gave every subject, "that Miss Carewe has been delayed."

"That may be." Dean Watson nodded thoughtfully.

And at that moment there was heard a sound in the distance which bore a slight resemblance to thunder except that it carried a rhythmic rise and fall and drew constantly nearer. Upon listening more closely, this sound proved indubitably to be the steady tramp of many feet on pavements and the concert of many automobiles proceeding "in low." When there was no longer any doubt

—for she was never hasty or impetuous—Dean Watson glanced questioningly at Dean Abrams. Dean Abrams in turn whispered something to one of the undergraduates, who went out to investigate.

He returned grinning boyishly. "They're bringing Miss Carewe!" he said.

"They" meant half the men of the State University if the terrific volume of sound was any proof. With all the eagerness of an avalanche, they bore Georgia Carewe to the outer sidewalk of the campus and deposited her on university territory.

The Board of Student Publications leaped to its collective feet.

"You can see why I was late!" cried Georgia Carewe as she threw open the door of Room 103. She was flushed and triumphant. Her eyes blazed. "It's—the biggest—date—I ever had in my life," she gasped between breaths. *"Imagine having several hundred men all to yourself!"*

Dean Watson, who had never been greatly interested even in one man, led her to a chair with maternal solicitude. "Do calm yourself!" whispered Dean Watson. But while she was trying to recall remedies for hysteria she had read, the girl was suddenly limp and smiling, more assured than anybody in the room.

"Never mind," she said. "I'm used to excitement."

With this inauspicious beginning, the hearing of the Board of Student Publications seemed doomed to a certain anti-climax. From the curb across the campus came the roar of several dozen cars waiting to take Miss Carewe home, and conversation proved a bit difficult. Miss Griffith's fine, studious eyes were wandering as Miss Watson took the chair at the head of the table and began laboriously explaining the purposes of the meeting.

Bowden was the only person in the room who from the first had showed no outward interest in the dramatic entrance of Georgia Carewe. From time to time she

glanced at him, but his gaze was sulkily fixed upon the floor.

". . . it is somewhat unfortunate," Dean Watson's mellow alto went on to cope with lack of attention from her hearers, "that, I may say, a mistaken impression has gone out about our little, informal meeting tonight. It is a matter of—yes, I may say, regret, that an ill-advised article has appeared in this morning's journal intimating that censorship was to be the object of our hearing——"

"I am sure," the Dean of Men put in for support, "that none of us have ever had any thought of censoring student publications."

From across the street came the raucous sound of many motor horns.

"Dean Abrams and I have prepared a statement for tomorrow's paper," Miss Watson continued gravely, "which should dispel all false rumors. Let us hope that we shall hear nothing further about the matter." She hesitated, glanced at Georgia Carewe, then continued almost regretfully as if afraid of offending the new campus celebrity. "Our only purpose in calling this meeting was, I may say, to *sug-gest* that we all be more *careful* about the material going into our publications."

Georgia Carewe's eyes brightened. The undergraduate members of the Board were showing more interest now, for they shrewdly guessed that Miss Watson's words pointed to a hasty retreat on the part of the deans—not even the deans could hold out against the disapproval of the entire faculty and student body.

Bowden was still staring at the floor, and his ears had taken on a rich shade of dull red.

"We must all remember that it is *our* University," said Dean Watson, "and we must not give the public a false impression of its faculty, or, I may say, its students." She smiled, then her tone became hushed and guarded. "As members of the Board we must be careful, too, about the scholastic standards of contributors to our publications. I am thinking of an instance in which

a contributor had been dropped from a publication because of low scholastic standards, but who had ignored the university regulation."

For Dean Watson this was harsh, direct language equivalent to profanity on the part of another and less reserved person. Everybody knew, of course, whom she meant; and Georgia Carewe replied brightly, without hesitation:

"But *The Lame Duck* needed a drawing so much, Dean Watson." She appeared to think this was reason enough for shattering all university edicts. She added, "I thought it was such a good one, too."

Bowden's ears went from red to a dull old mahogany.

Why, he asked himself ferociously, had he been called to this stupid meeting which from the start had been a farce? What, he wondered, would happen if he suddenly and wilfully pulled Dean Watson's unpowdered nose? . . . And then he heard his name:

"—we have asked Mr. Bowden to meet with us tonight because the Board thought an explanation was due him, under the circumstances, for your cartoon, Miss Carewe." Dean Abrams was speaking with grasp and decision befitting a Dean of Men whose job it was to spank (scholastically) several thousand male students of a great State University. "We are all agreed, I think, that for the good of the institution there are certain limitations to public criticism of the faculty, and I think we would all be interested in hearing from Mr. Bowden before we proceed further."

Everybody was waiting. Bowden awkwardly got to his feet. "I don't want any explanation!" he said, and he looked sulkily from one to another of the amazed deans.

For the first time in his life he was in the wrong, and he found it pleasant to be wrong. Looking ludicrously like a football tackler rather than an instructor of the State University, he stood with his feet apart and his

shoulders hunched. All the rebellion of the last year was smouldering in his eyes.

"I thought it was a wonder of a caricature! I liked it! It showed me what a joke I was as an instructor—I'm writing in my resignation tomorrow."

He sat down abruptly, still looking sulky.

In the vast, foggy silence which followed, Dean Watson's "Ah!" was audible over the room and Miss Griffith's agitated breathing could plainly be heard. Dean Abrams was blinking furiously.

There was nothing, absolutely nothing in the university regulations to cover a situation like this. Apparently it had never occurred to the regents that some time a young instructor might explode without warning. . . . A painful moment passed before Dean Watson recovered her presence of mind. Finally she remarked as tactfully as possible that Mr. Bowden's decision had, of course, disposed of the incident and since no more explanations were necessary it might be well to proceed to the discussion of other business at hand.

There being no other business at hand, the meeting was interred as decently as possible with a few well-chosen words from Miss Griffith. At once the undergraduates bolted for the door with Bowden in their wake, leaving the deans in full possession of Room 103.

VI

In the hall Georgia Carewe unceremoniously sent the other students on their way and waited for Bowden. She looked at him curiously, with new respect. "You *are,*" she said slowly, and her voice held immense conviction, *"a—good—egg!"* She continued to look at him in the same curious way; her eyes continued to be round and blue and solemn as a child's. "Who'd ever have thought it of *you?* I want you to take me home tonight."

First Bowden felt a quick, hot flush of pride and

gratitude and then all at once he was ashamed of his new disloyalty to his position, to the faculty, to the deans. He wished he could withdraw his hasty, thoughtless rebellion of a few minutes ago. He looked at her coldly, with all his old aloofness.

"I can't," he said brusquely. "I have work to do tonight."

"Just don't think about it and you'll be all right."

"I'm sorry," he persisted, "but——"

"Come on, be a good fellow!" She snuggled her arm confidently in his as if everything were settled, as indeed it was. "Why work while you still have your youth and beauty? I'll get Red Enright's car—I'm learning to drive it beautifully—and we'll soothe our troubled souls with speed."

He crossed the campus with her, helpless to escape. Beyond the outer sidewalk waited her escorts, the army having dwindled to a scant few. It was response to Spring rather than love of liberty which had aroused the students out of their usual stolid indifference, and most of them had departed to their dances, their poker games or their endless wrangling. But the few who were left set up a shout upon seeing Georgia . . . with puzzled glances at Bowden they surrounded her and hurled questions at her. Swiftly she told them what had happened, but she did not mention Bowden or his part in the evening. "I'm dizzy," she cried at last. "Give me time—I'll tell you all about it tomorrow."

She said goodnight to them casually. "Nice boys, aren't they?" she shouted to Bowden above the din of starting motors. "In five minutes they'll have forgotten all about it—and about me, too. Isn't it a shame?"

Bowden did not believe her. But he could think of nothing to say, and she did not speak again until they had turned out of the line of departing cars into a side street. "Why," she asked suddenly in a very matter-of-fact way, "did you resign?"

He wanted to tell her it was because of her, but this

would not be quite true, so he said: "Because I hated teaching. Because I was no good at it. I got into it because my father had always been a professor and it seemed the thing. But it wasn't. Not for me. So I quit, that's all. I've been intending to for a long time. For several days."

"And now what?"

"What I've wanted to do all this year that I've hated teaching—engineering of some sort. Electrical, maybe. I'll go back as a student next semester and see it through that way."

"Going to play around with me next year? Dance with me?"

"Yes——" He faced her resolutely. "Wait! You don't know yet—I flunked you in Logic I this afternoon." He added grimly, "You deserved it, too."

Her laugh was bantering. "That's nothing to boast about—almost every instructor has flunked me at one time or another. Why, if I went around getting mad at instructors who flunked me I wouldn't have a friend left on the faculty!"

They drove along a shadowy country road in silence for a while, and Bowden wondered where she was taking him, for there was no explaining this girl. Then beside the dark, sleeping forms of trees by the roadside he saw lights. They were strange to him and he asked himself what they were.

"Look!" he cried. She stopped the car so suddenly that they lurched forward in the seat.

He showed them to her. Not millions of fireflies as she had once said, maybe only a dozen or two, and yet they did seem more. Tiny lamps flashing in and out of the darkness in a curious pattern of motion. A gay, mysterious world out here in the night. "A city bigger than Babylon or Troy . . . and more ancient."

He watched her throat and chin against the dim sky, and again he felt as he had felt the night he saw her dancing in the Alpha Chi Omega house. He felt the

wistfulness of her warm, brave immaturity—the barbaric, childlike gravity of her—the gallantry of her youthful nonsense.

There was something he wanted to say to her and he could not think what it was. Once or twice he almost had it, then with her head on his shoulder he knew it was not the wisdom of words he sought but the wisdom of her eyes, which would never be troubled by knowledge, and the wisdom of her lips, which were poised for folly.

Sixteenth Episode:
THE STATE *VS.* PROTHEROE

From the university regulations:

> *The University reserves the right to dismiss any student, without making definite charges, whenever in its judgment the general welfare seems to demand such action.*

XVI: *The State vs. Protheroe*

MISS PENNYWELL knocked at the last door along the dormitory corridor and very promptly but gently the door was opened. With poised graciousness Elaine Leffing motioned Miss Pennywell to an armchair and seated herself at the desk from which she had risen. A notebook and a history lay open on the desk. There was a spot of ink on Elaine's straight, young nose.

"There is," said Miss Pennywell, "a young man to see you."

"But I have no engagement," murmured Elaine, fingering her pen.

"He is in the reception parlor," said Miss Pennywell. "He—ah—says he *must* see you."

"But I'm studying for a history final," protested Elaine. "And anyhow—who can he be?"

The matron scrutinized the girl sharply but Elaine's eyes were candid, deliciously blue and unshadowed by guile. She turned her heavenly young face toward Miss Pennywell with the quaintest air of demure inquisitiveness.

"It's——" the matron paused as if her revelation were shocking. "It's that Andy Protheroe!" she blurted in a strained voice.

Elaine's lovely color was of the vanishing type. It vanished now. "He annoyed me once before," she confessed.

Miss Pennywell drew a long breath and said rapidly: "I hope—I am sure—that you will have nothing to do with him, Elaine. Of course it's none of my business

. . . but as the head matron of Grace Dormitory I feel it my duty to tell you that he has the name of being—well, too *sophisticated*, let us say. He has been on the campus for years and years without managing to graduate . . . he belongs to that wild A. O. G. fraternity . . . they say he drinks and gambles and runs about with the—less admirable women. A sweet girl like you can hardly afford to be seen with him. You do understand what I mean, don't you, dear?"

"Oh, I do," said Elaine shyly. She reached for her hat which lay on the couch.

"But you're not going out with him now?" cried Miss Pennywell.

"Certainly not," said Elaine, astonished at the notion. "I'm going to the library. Please don't worry, Miss Pennywell. I'll just stop in the parlor and tell him he needn't call again."

With a relieved smile the matron patted Elaine's soft shoulder. "Of course it's *none* of my business," she apologized as she went out.

In her sensible dress of green linen, in her green felt hat and low-heeled slippers, Elaine was a charming picture of what the young girl should—but seldom does—wear. She had the face of an angel and she adorned it with the merest touch of talcum powder as even an angel might be permitted to do. Her serene lips, her tall, light grace, her quiet step suggested the saint or the goddess, but never the nymph or elf; there was no touch of human madness, no restlessness, no hunger or quickened longing in her exquisite eyes.

All the bland firmness of her unworldly youth spoke to Andy Protheroe in her clear even voice as she said: "Please don't call again—I've told you before that it's really no use." Nevertheless her heart beat rapidly as he looked at her; for she was very young—and he was said to be the most dangerous man at the State University.

His look was growing more fixed. "Please stand under this light a minute, will you?" he said.

Confused, she moved toward the tall piano lamp.

He put his finger gently on her nose. "A spot of ink right there. Take my handkerchief." He watched with detached interest while she rubbed angrily at the blemishing spot.

"That's right," he said in a fatherly voice. "Now where shall we go?"

She lifted her chin with a coldness that would have intimidated a less bold, less experienced man. "Nowhere at all," she said and walked out into the hall. Andy followed her and courteously opened the heavy, outer door.

"It's a pity to waste all these stars," he murmured looking up at the warm, milky sheen of the June sky.

"I'm not taking astrology," she said with a girl's ineffectual sarcasm.

He smiled indulgently at her. His eyes were soft and dark, his mustache a faint accent of maturity above his boyishly cynical mouth. "That good-looking sports roadster over there is mine. I'll take you to wherever you're going. Is it the library? You look as if you were going to the library."

Elaine thought she was annoyed because he was so persistent; but it was really because no woman wants to look as if she were going to the library. She felt like crying, "Oh, shut up!" She said: "No thank you, Mr. Protheroe. It isn't far."

He walked down the steps beside her. "Come, come, my child," he said soothingly. "I'm really an awfully good egg when you get to know me, and not all sports roadsters are as bad as they're painted. I think you've been reading too many novels, honestly. I don't believe in novels. They give young girls such balmy ideas about men."

So Andy Protheroe thought she was afraid of him! Elaine was glad he couldn't see the flush that made her face burn. In angry defiance she marched over to the low car and climbed stiffly in.

He was silent until they were being borne by eight

well-mannered cylinders down the avenue; then he said: "Why do you live at that dormitory? I drove around the block three times before I could get the courage to go in."

"You wouldn't be interested," she said, "in the ideals of Grace Dormitory."

"What are they?" said Andy with interest. "I don't think I ever heard."

"Service. Loyalty to Beauty and Honesty." She was quoting at random from a pamphlet she remembered. "The uplift of the downtrodden, with truthfulness and kindliness toward all."

"If she weren't beautiful," Andy murmured to the night, "I would say she was absolutely nutty."

"*What?*" she asked crisply.

"I was humming a new bit of jazz." He looked into her lovely, earnest young face. "The point is, my child, that you're neither kind or truthful." He drove past the library at this moment but she was too startled by his words to notice the oversight.

II

"You're not kind to me," he said, unobtrusively turning into the dimmest campus driveway, "you'll admit that. And you're not truthful when you say that you don't like me."

"But I haven't said it!" she gasped. "I only talked to you that time you walked home from class with——"

"Then you do?" he asked eagerly, looking into her shadowy eyes.

His arrogant face was close to hers and she drew back in horrified discovery. "But you've been drinking!" she cried.

He was all at once frank and boyishly desirous of making her understand. "I know it," he admitted quickly, "that is if you would call a glass or two of Scotch drinking. Some people wouldn't. Bill Lait wouldn't.

He's my roommate—but that isn't important. You're the only important thing. I don't want to be crazy about you—but I am. This is honestly the truth—there's something so damned unattainable about your eyes and mouth . . . no, not your mouth, just your eyes. And so I'm afraid of you. I know it's hard to believe that I'd be afraid of any woman—I can hardly believe it myself,—but God knows I couldn't get up my courage to come and bust in on you this way tonight without a stimulant. I really didn't want it—it wasn't very good Scotch—but I took it because I wouldn't have had the nerve to come without it!"

She was startled and moved by the utter sincerity in his face, and she knew in her woman's heart that he was not lying.

Fascinated, she watched the cavalier line of his profile and the careless slouch of his shoulders above the steering wheel.

Many men had already told Elaine they loved her, but none had known how to tell her in this strange violent way. She remembered all the things she had heard about Andy—what was it they said of him? The most popular . . . the most fastidious . . . the best-looking—the most eloquent, the laziest and worldliest and most good-for-nothing perpetual senior who had ever haunted a State University.

But she kept thinking: "How blonde he is. How boyish he is." And the tight silver mesh woven over the whole sky by the countless stars seemed also to hold the world in a magic net and lay a spell of strangeness upon the earth.

He reached out his arm and casually drew her close to him. She pulled away in fierce resentment and found herself trembling as she huddled in her corner of the seat.

"What's the matter?" he exclaimed crossly.

"You've—you've been drinking," she repeated doggedly.

"I forget," he said with a patient smile. "You have ideals. Well, tell me about them. What good are they? What are you going to do with them?"

Elaine thought triumphantly that she had mastered the situation—he was accepting her standards with docility. She spoke in a clear, sweet voice. "I'm a rather serious person—I want to do some good in the world. When I leave college I'm going to be a worker in the slums, a deaconess, perhaps, and give my life to charity and social service."

"A worker in the slums," he murmured thoughtfully. "Why don't you begin on the A. O. G. house?"

She laughed. "The trouble is you don't take me seriously."

"Take you seriously!" he cried turning to her so abruptly that she started. "Would I be afraid of a woman I didn't take seriously? Why do you suppose I'm making such a fool of myself? Why do you suppose I crashed into Grace Dormitory tonight? Why do I sit here listening to all that rot about charity and ideals instead of kissing you?"

"Because I shall never allow you to kiss me," she said icily. She sat erect with what she fancied to be an unapproachable posture. She believed now that he was really afraid of her.

An odd, choking sound of either laughter or profanity came from his throat. With one hand he reached out and drew her face relentlessly to his and brushed his lips along her cool cheek until they found her mouth. She was crushed against the steering wheel. The roughness of his coat was scratching her chin. At first she struggled wildly, and then she found that his arm was no longer adamant. She was not being held by his strength. It was his emotion that made her weak and unable to free herself. . . . She shut her eyes. A moment later she found that her fingers were clinging tightly to the back of his coat collar. . . .

"Let me go," she whispered without conviction.

"I'm not holding you," said Andy gently, "you're holding me, dear."

"You're a perfect brute," she whimpered, without lifting her head from his shoulder. "You hurt my chin."

"I love you too," he said. "Even if you are choking me to death."

She hastily relaxed her fingers but he bent to kiss her again. . . . The car was taking an erratic course while Andy steered with blind instinct and his left hand.

Suddenly, as all such things happen, there was an astonishing crash of steel and shattered glass and the scream of brakes. Andy stopped his car so suddenly that Elaine bounced up in the air and down again. Something small and shining catapulted from the open roadster and vanished in the darkness of the road. Again the crash of glass . . . a groan, a series of little shrieks. Like a strange, twisted monster with gleaming eyes another automobile shuddered against a great tree trunk and was still. . . . "Oh hell," said Andy with a deep sigh. He sat quite motionless as if he were just emerging from a dream and stared at the scene of chaos without blinking.

Above the unpleasant smell of motor oil and gasoline rose another odor—a strong, officious, tangy odor proclaiming to Heaven that it had been bottled in bond, or at least bottled by a bonded bootlegger.

"That," said Andy under his breath, "is rotten luck." He looked very unhappy.

III

Elaine arose from the bottom of the car, pushed open the door and slid out. Her face was white and terrified. At the same moment a dusty figure got up from the gravel in front of the roadster's headlights and fiercely sniffed the ascendant odor. He was a short, lean, spectacled

bearded gentleman who wore an air of authority in spite of his alpaca jacket and disordered hair.

It was the Dean of Men. . . . And Andy's undergraduate heart felt heavy and cold in his chest.

"Who's driving that car?" Dean Abram's voice was shrill and petulant.

Instead of answering, Andy found a cigarette and lit it with unsteady fingers.

The Dean limped forward angrily and peered beyond the cigarette glow. "So it's you, Protheroe," he barked. He did not even need his famous memory system, for Andy was well known to him; until this evening they had been political allies and exchanged many a racy joke across the executive desk.

Andy tried to smile pleasantly. "Is my car much damaged, sir?"

Dean Abrams snorted. He glared bitterly at the heavy, glittering expanse of roadster with its gaudy array of double bumpers and all manner of nickeled armor protecting its precious blue paint. It was obvious that the Dean's modest, cheap, light sedan had suffered the really violent injuries.

"Now none of your impudence, Protheroe! You were driving on the left side of the road. You were speeding. And what's more——" the Dean inhaled the tainted air with the look of a greyhound on the scent—"what's more, you are intoxicated. Something hit me on the forehead——" he tapped a small wound near his temple, "And I am convinced it was a bottle thrown from your car."

"You know me better than that," objected Andy in an injured tone. "You know that I wouldn't be throwing bottles—especially at you, sir."

The Dean smiled grimly. "You talk too much, Protheroe. Better save your eloquence for the court room."

Two old ladies who had been tumbled from the tonneau of the groggy sedan came up to stare accusingly at Andy. "Is he intoxicated!" one of them whispered to the Dean.

It was Mrs. Abrams. The other was a professor's elderly wife.

"Don't you know whiskey when you smell it?" retorted the Dean testily.

The ladies gazed in horror at Andy as if he were a repulsive phenomenon.

Andy regarded his huge steering wheel sulkily.

"But there was some one with him," cried the professor's wife. "I am positive it was a—girl."

"Sorry to contradict you," said Andy in a tense voice. "I was alone." At the same time he glanced off into the shadows wondering how Elaine could have vanished so quietly.

"No need to lie, Protheroe," snapped the Dean. "I saw her. Furthermore I recognized her."

His voice was triumphant, even exultant. After all he was a dean of men, and the memory system was his hobby. He was continually being chagrined by its failure —but this time, even in the stress of accident, it had been successful!

He was so delighted that for a moment he felt more kindly toward Andy. "Now, Protheroe," he began in what he felt to be an indulgent voice, "I don't want any unpleasantness about this even though it is a serious matter. We've always been friends——"

Andy interrupted with an exclamation which caused the old ladies to jump back several paces. *"Intoxicated!"* they gasped fearfully.

The dean's insinuation that Elaine must be dragged into the matter had infuriated Andy. Her terrified face as she fled from the car was etched on his mind in staring, white lines that he would never forget. All along he had guessed that she distrusted him and all the things he stood for; he had inveigled her into coming; perhaps it was even her first kiss . . . she was so young and her lips had been as incredibly gentle and yielding as a child's. He felt sick with shame that so lovely a moment could end in such crass disaster.

Crass! That was the word for it. He was crass. The dean was crass. The university system was crass. Andy Protheroe was done for now. And he was quite, quite finished in the eyes of Elaine. Her terrified eyes staring at him beneath the warm, milky sheen of the June stars . . . her young, frightened face etched in white lines immemorially——

He leaned forward to glower at Dean Abrams in a burst of fury, forgetting all caution or restraint.

"Yeah, we've been friends until now, and why? Because I played your game and flattered you and let you think you understood me through and through! Sure, I ladled out the old bull and you said to yourself, 'Old Protheroe's not a bad egg even though he is damned dumb. I can handle him.' Well, I may be damned dumb but you don't known anything about me, see? I have my own ideas about you and the University and the world—and they may not be highbrow ideas but they're my own. I think with my own brain! And you think with an institution!"

He drew in his breath quiveringly and his voice became lower and steadier as his emotion grew.

"You're like a traffic cop, sir. Yes, you're like a moral traffic cop! We all speed by you in high-powered cars—we have to, because that's the way youth travels —and you think because you understand the signals you understand *us. But you don't even know where we're going!* You don't know why we laugh. You don't know why we yell jazz. You don't know the meaning of a single speck of the merry, maddening, ceaseless dust we kick up! Why if you had the least idea you'd throw up your arms and say: 'Let me out of here! I don't want to be a dean of men! I want to live!' "

Andy stared into the dean's transfixed eyes and for half a moment they looked tragic and worn and bewildered. And the next instant the set mask of authority lay again upon Dean Abram's face. He looked at Andy with

the impervious scorn of age observing youth make a complete ass of itself.

"That's enough, Protheroe." He spoke through the thick folds of a muffling dignity. "I think the University has had enough of you! We shall none of us regret your graceful or ungraceful exit——"

But even while the dean's words were still falling coldly on the June night, Andy threw his car into gear, lifted his hat meticulously to the aghast old ladies, and was off like an insouciant blue arrow along the quiet driveway.

Five minutes later he rushed noisily into the room he shared with Bill Lait and stopped still in the middle of the floor. Bill looked up from the bed where he was sprawled and his ugly, good-natured face became oddly solicitous as he noticed Andy's whiteness and heard his loud, unamused laughter.

Andy looked very peculiar with his well-groomed hair rumpled and his careful necktie askew.

And suddenly he put out one hand to steady himself, at the same time grinning a wan apology. "My God, Bill," he said in a childishly puzzled voice, "I'm sunk, Bill. You see, I'm—sunk."

IV

He flung himself astride a chair and teetered back and forth excitedly while he talked. Bill listened with concern, muttering "Ass!" or "Fool!" at regular intervals.

In spite of his white eyebrows and uncouth features Bill was loved by women for his gentleness; rude and diffident, he was still popular with men; he was at the same time lazy and brilliant, cynical and sentimental; a scoffer and a loyalist. For four years Andy Protheroe had been Bill's absurd, ungodlike god.

During the story Bill stared owlishly at the ceiling as

he always did when he was distressed, and painfully grimaced.

"If I'd only gone home," murmured Andy, contemplating fate, "after my last final, instead of hanging around for the senior ball——! Or if I hadn't been low and got to thinking about that gorgeous creature and crashed into Grace Dormitory——! Or if I had only happened to hold the right side of the road——!"

"Or if you had only happened to hold your tongue," groaned Bill.

"Well, there's no use whimpering about spilled whiskey," said Andy, trying to be flippant. "And, anyhow, he can't prove it was mine. . . . Who would have thought that bottle would fly out and hit him on the parapet? . . . Honestly, Bill, if he hadn't started to wisecrack I'd have got out and helped him pick up the pieces of his kiddy-kar."

"Who's wise-crackin' now?" said Bill sternly. "This is serious if-you-know-what-I-mean."

Even as he spoke there was a prolonged harsh ringing of the bell below and the quick trample of feet up the stairs. Three of the A. O. G. brothers burst into the room.

"Hey, Andy, whatcha been doing?"

"There's a cop down there with a summons for you—forget the parking rules?"

"Maybe it's a raid——"

And Bill moaned with pain when somebody remarked as somebody always remarks, "Don't give your right name!"

Andy rose. "Here are the papers," he said, handing Bill an economics text book, "and if anything happens to me give them to the leetle gal. I want her to have them along with her mother's wedding ring. Before Heaven she was innocent but he ruined her. I'm going to shoot him down like a dawg. When you hear the third shot throw the papers out of the window and call up a reliable mortuary parlor."

But as Andy went out, he was nervously moistening his lips with his tongue.

V

Solemnly, Bill drew young Podhurst aside and spoke in an undertone. Podhurst was a journalist and on the editorial staff of the campus daily.

"Have you got any inflooence on the college rag?" demanded Bill. "If you have don't let them broadcast any dirt about Andy, see?"

Podhurst shrugged his thin shoulders coldly. He had never liked Andy since Andy had made light of the Great American Epic (by Podhurst). "Really Bill," he protested in his high petulant voice, "Andy's old enough to stop pulling the sophomoric stuff, don't you think? Why is everybody always running around trying to save poor Andy from embarrassment? It's time he was achieving some maturity I should say."

And to Bill's indignation and anxiety the sentiment seemed to be echoed the next day by most of the campus. As a brilliant and almost legendary figure of gaiety and hedonism, Andy had acquired many enemies. Most of them were glad to be seen talking to him, most of them would speak of him in later years as an amazing tradition, but they resented him now because he made them feel stodgy. He was, as Prof. Fannicott once said, the thorn in the academic flesh.

Everybody was delighted, of course, that he had smashed the Dean's car and injured the Dean's pride; but openly they applauded the spirit of a short editorial in the student newspaper beginning:

> Far from regretting that youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close we feel, on the contrary, that it is a consummation devoutly to be wished for, —especially in the case of those typical collegiates

who, adumbrating in a far-fetched adolescence, fail to achieve maturity and one is pained to see them continuing their ebullient manifestations——

Bill wrinkled his brow over this tangled piece of hectic rhetoric. Somebody had told him it meant Andy, but Bill insisted that it didn't mean anything.

He was particularly incensed by the word *ebullient.* "*Ebullient!*" he sneered ferociously, "Bull! The sap who uses that word uses a chaser after a drink of pop."

Andy soothed him by pointing out the extreme caution and conservatism of the students' news story. The town's daily paper had delighted in exaggerating the affair at Dean Abram's expense—town has hated gown since the first Oxford upstart thumbed his nose at a mayor. But the greatest city sheet in the state came out with a joyously ribald version which Andy blushed to read:

STUDENT SHEIK HURLS
DEFY AT PEDAGOGUE

and in the airy terms of humorous journalese Andy appeared as a student Valentino and bootlegger who had hurled not only a defy but a bottle at the hoary preceptor. Abrams was raucously pictured as a musical comedy professor gratefully licking off the drops of whiskey as they trickled down his face. News was scarce. There was neither a hammer murder nor a political probe to vie with the student sheik. Andy was particularly embarrassed by the thumbnail cartoon in which his hair was elaborately marcelled.

This was actual ignominy. He felt lonely and harassed by amused eyes as he walked across the campus that morning. He had been so innocently vain of being popular and admired that adverse opinion hurt him to the depths of his childish heart. As he passed a group of co-eds he heard a whisper, "Look, there goes *that Prothero!*" and he hurried on self-consciously. He wondered

what they would say if he were given a jail sentence at the hearing tomorrow. And he wondered what he would do if he were given a heavy fine. Andy was more despondent than ever before in his careless life. He had gaily planned to return next year as a senior again—instead he had ended his long reign as college dictator ineptly and ingloriously.

In a few days Bill Lait would graduate—and Tracy Belnap and Tom Fatleigh and Georgia Carewe. These, the old guard, who had worshipped Andy from their freshmen years, would graduate pitying him and whispering: "Poor old Andy! Isn't it rotten he got into that mess!" And they would always remember him as being a little stupid, a trifle sophomoric. . . .

VI

When Bill came into the room that afternoon Andy was sitting alone playing solitaire. Bill had never seen Andy play solitaire before—he loved to be in large groups of people and if he could help it he was never by himself. Even to Bill's unsubtle mind there was something curiously pathetic about Andy Protheroe playing that dull game of lonely people . . . for outside, the June sunlight hovered in golden fantasy, and the campus was gay with youth and color and laughter.

"Ay, Andy," said Bill, "here's the latest bulletin! Tabloid news! I just heard in to Larry's that Dean Abrams had a conference with the matron of Goodness Gracious Dormitory and she spilled him a snowy drink about you kidnapping this Elaine against her will. And how the wretch said you had 'annoyed' her before and she didn't want to be seen with you."

Carefully Andy put a red ten-spot on a red jack. "That's all straight," he said evenly without raising his head.

Bill stared at him. "But what kinduva Carbohydrate is this wretch?"

"I should say she was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen," replied Andy removing the red ten-spot from the red jack. "And quite serious. . . . I think she said she was going to be a deaconess or a social worker or something like that."

"Gosh!" muttered Bill. He rolled his eyes toward the ceiling and grimaced horribly.

"Don't do that," said Andy irritably. "You look like a clasmic pack."

"But you ass!" fumed Bill. "They say in to Larry's that the Dean is going to have her testify against you tomorrow——"

"Well, let her! It won't cost you anything, will it?"

Rebuffed by the cold dreariness of Andy's tone Bill sat down on the bed and began to pluck his banjo very low. While Andy slapped the cards sharply against the table Bill sang with a thoughtful sadness:

"Mr. McKinley, he ain't done no wrong,
He went down to Buffalo, way Michigan along,
For to lay him down boys,
For to lay him dow-ow-ow-n."

He stopped suddenly. "But look, Andy, you ought to call her or see her—be yourself, man. You know how to handle these women! You can't let her get up in a courtroom and tell how you'd been drinking and——"

"I've tried to call her four times and gone over there once. They say I can't see her." Andy's lips were a hard, straight line, his eyes frozen and withheld.

Bill swore elaborately. His plaintive, nasal chant arose again like the detached voice of a ludicrously tragic cockatoo. His long, thin fingers deftly juggled with the strings.

"Mr. McKinley, he went there for fun,
But Sholgosh he shot him with an Ivor-Johnson gun

For to lay him down, boys,
For to lay him dow-ow-ow-ow-n."

Andy jumped to his feet and nervously threw the pack of cards across the room. "Oh, cripes!" he cried with petulance as unrestrained and violent as a child's. "I can't stand that infernal plunking."

Bill put down his banjo with such a hurt, bewildered look that Andy paused in the doorway. He glanced at Bill's ugly, faithful countenance, and suddenly felt a swell of emotion over their easy comradeship so soon to be ended. He wanted to tell Bill what a good egg he was . . . how much you hated to see a good egg like that vanish from the campus and disappear into the oblivion of bond salesmanship and parenthood . . . one day they would meet over cigars and highballs at some stodgy convention: *"Well, how are you, Lait?" "Sittin' pretty, Protheroe. How's yourself?"* And they would avoid each others' eyes, vaguely remembering that once they had hit the sharp heights and depths of youth together. . . . "At that," said Andy gently, "it's really a wow of a song."

Bill's face brightened; as Andy went down the stairs the plaintive, nasal chant followed him . . . detached, ludicrously tragic——

"Mrs. McKinley, she hollered and she swore,
When they told her her good man
Wasn't comin' home no more
For to lay him down, boys,
For to lay him dow-ow-ow-own——"

Without knowing where he was going Andy was drawn irresistibly toward the campus walking with a rapid step as if he had some goal. Past Larry's poolroom, where three men said in chorus "Ay, Andy," and glanced at him curiously . . . past a bookstore where a pretty blonde girl behind the counter waved hopefully . . . past

the gymnasium and Spencer Hall and the library,—out across the greensward lying serene beneath wavering shadow and patterned sunlight to the clump of cottonwoods on a low knoll.

Here he stopped and stood looking at the campus with his straight brows drawn together in a frown. He tried to think and found his restless hands fumbling mechanically for a cigarette. His grave, shallow, handsome eyes took in the great swathe of blue sky between the piled drifts of clouds . . . the dark red of the tall buildings against dazzling blue and velvet green and white. His heart leaped as it always did in response to color and it seemed to him dimly that color was the thing his University most deprecated.

Perhaps gaiety and romance and the whisper of all old cavalier things were irrevocably lost to the modern world? He had invented them for himself here on the campus but he could not quite believe in them and he wondered if they existed anywhere. He knew vaguely that the sunny greensward with the shadows lapping it like the unquiet waves of a mysterious sea and the white pillars and Gothic towers and ancient, rugged trees—these should assure him that majestic things, high-hearted things (glamor and valor and courtesy) existed. And still he was not sure. Decent solemnity was expected of men these days and color was deprecated. . . . He had created for himself a little court here, but the courtiers thought secretly that even a jester should achieve maturity . . . he had exchanged wit with an old preceptor who, in the end, hid behind the mask of authority . . . he had found the perfect kiss of Elaine but Elaine had spoken of Service and loyalty to Beauty and Honesty. . . . This was his university and as he looked at it his throat contracted because the flat, green prairieland beneath blue sky was beautiful in June, and because he was, at heart, sentimental. But it had tried to teach him solemnity and the humorless stodginess of the world's business . . . and he had failed, and it had failed.

VII

This mood of dreariness persisted until the next morning when it was lifted by Andy's surprise that life, the stage manager, should place the drama of men's grievous troubles against the comedy background of court rooms. The sunlight pouring relentlessly through the unwashed windows revealed the shabbiness of the worn, darkened benches and suffused the judge's bald head with a rich pinkish glow. He was a large, corpulent judge with a neatly graduated series of chins resting on the point of his wing collar. On one plump finger he wore a ruby ring, and in his black tie nestled a gold four leaf clover set with a modest diamond. He had that look of freshly-scrubbed babyish cleanness which only a fat, fair man can achieve.

"Well, the dean beat us to it," muttered Bill to Andy as they entered. "He's taken the best seat. The usher will probably put us in Section Z behind a pillar."

"This is no matinée," said Andy lightly.

Bill accosted the bailiff who was stealthily advancing with a long pole to open more windows. "Give us two programs," said Bill earnestly, "and a box of Allegretti chocolates."

"Come on, you idiot," whispered Andy tugging at Bill's arm.

"Order!" said the judge, tapping the desk mildly with a new varnished gavel.

Dean Abrams, Mrs. Abrams, and old Prof. Hardcap's wife sat with stiff dignity in their chairs and did not glance about as Bill and Andy lounged past. In the back of the room a small group of undergraduates whispered and snickered. They had come to see Andy Protheroe in his moment of defeat, having waited many years for such an occasion. Podhurst was among them, trying to look fraternally apprehensive in the name of A. O. G. But there was a pleased glint in his eyes and Andy hated

him. He didn't hate the dean. Abrams was too small and old and inept to be hated. Andy found himself looking at the lean, rather scholarly head and wondering what a dean thinks about.

"I talked to Prof. Gabler about it," Bill whispered hoarsely, "and he says Abrams can't dismiss you if the judge lets you off."

"Fat chance of that," said Andy without hope. "What'll he give me, Bill? Sixty days? Ninety days! My Lord, Bill, that would take it clear into September—I wouldn't be out in time to manage our rushing."

"If it was me," said Bill, "I'd rather be sent up than pay a fine of five hundred."

"Holy cow, Bill! *Five hundred?* I'd have to sell the car."

"They may take it anyway," said Bill pessimistically.

"Well, maybe I'll learn to make something useful in jail," said Andy, "like burnt woodwork or silk lamp shades."

"Send me a pink georgette one!" cried Bill, slapping Andy's shoulder smartly, and they both guffawed aloud.

"Order! Order!"

An officer lounging by the rail frowned at them. A brisk young book salesman was being fined a dollar and costs for an infringement of the parking ordinance. A case of speeding followed and a high school youth paid the court three dollars and hurried out.

The State vs. Protheroe was next. Andy wiped his forehead, feeling nervous and humiliated. A moment before, he had guffawed noisily in a hysterical simulation of amusement. But he was panicky now and sickened by the stupidity of his disaster. Lies—exaggerations—unsavory tales would get around. When his name was mentioned people would say, "Oh, he was that ass who got swacked and threw a bottle at the dean?" Nobody admired that sort of thing.

The university would remember him as an antiquated buffoon. If there was a jail sentence he would spend the

sultry, middle western summer in unbearable degradation of spirit and body. His pride and fastidiousness recoiled from the possibility. He dared not lift his eyes as his case was called but pretended to be studying an old theater program he drew from his pocket. Even his ears were crimson and he found it difficult to swallow.

An officer read the surprising list of charges: Driving while intoxicated. . . . Driving on the left side of the street. . . . Speeding. . . . Violent and abusive language. . . . Disorderly conduct. "That gentleman there," said the policeman, pointing clumsily at Dean Abrams, "brought in these charges."

"How about this?" said the judge turning his round blue eyes unblinkingly upon the dean. The dean arose with slow, fussy movements. He surveyed the court with the air of an after-dinner speaker expecting applause. "Your honor," he said, investing the title with irony, "I was driving slowly along College Avenue at 8:24 Thursday evening accompanied by my wife and Mrs. Hardcap. I was on my way to a banquet given by the senior class, where I was to deliver a short talk on the morals and manners of the younger generation." He paused effectively and was rewarded by laughter from the back of the room.

"Well, well?" said the judge in moist, perspiring impatience. Abrams told his story concisely, drily, with conscientious regard to facts and most plausible conclusions. The dean's talent for persuasion convinced even Andy and he was appalled. Had his conduct actually been that ignoble? Once the judge glanced at him in astonishment—with his meticulous grooming and fine, aristocratic face, Andy looked anything but the hoodlum. Yet here were the facts, presented incontrovertibly! Even Bill sat with his head pressed gloomily into his hands.

"Was this what happened, Mrs. Abrams?"

"It was, your honor." The dean's wife pressed her lips together firmly.

"And the bottle broken in the roadway contained whiskey, you would say?"

"Yes, judge."

"You are familiar with the taste and smell of whiskey?"

"Certainly not!" said Mrs. Abrams tartly.

The dean looked annoyed and whispered something to her. She added weakly: "I have *smelled* it several times, judge."

The students shuffled and tittered in enjoyment.

"And what does the defendant say?" asked the judge, leaning back informally.

"Not guilty," said Andy in a low, strained voice. He turned his eyes sulkily away from the judge's round, unwavering stare.

"You have nothing to add?"

"Get up and defend yourself," whispered Bill, desperately, pounding Andy in the ribs.

"Nothing to say, your honor," muttered Andy, looking white. For the life of him he could not rise and face the curious, amused crowd of students. Bill groaned.

"Now how about this young lady who was along?" mused the judge, polishing his spectacles. "Is Miss Leffing in the courtroom?"

To Andy's astonishment there was a sound in the back of the room and Elaine moved quietly forward. He had not seen her enter. The dean's eyes twinkled across at Andy from under bushy brows. His triumphant glance seemed to say: "You see, my boy, it's the memory system. Works, doesn't it?"

Elaine stood tall and poised before the judicial railing. She was unbelievably fair and lovely, with the sweet, innocent charm of the vanishing old-fashioned girl. A great ray of sunlight rested luminously upon her Madonna face with the faint dusting of talcum powder which even an angel might be permitted to wear; her hair was turned to soft gold above the clear gray of her eyes.

"You're right," whispered Bill. "The wretch is a knockout."

At sight of her Andy felt so miserable that his head began to ache violently. With one finger he smoothed his small mustache to hide the nervous tremor of his mouth. He remembered her hand clinging tightly to his collar while her lips lay trustfully on his. . . . Could that really have happened? It all seemed incredible!

And now she was speaking, her voice deliberate and clear, her eyes steadily candid. The judge leaned across his desk with a fatuous, sentimental look growing on his pink face. His plump lips were parted. He seemed to have forgotten everything but the new witness. When one of the students whistled rapturously the judge frowned without removing his gaze.

"I had no engagement with Mr. Protheroe," Elaine was saying. "He had asked me to go out with him but I refused since I was on my way to the library to study for a history final."

"Yes, Miss Leffing?" said the judge very, very softly. Ah, here was magic indeed! Not one of those flappers with rolled stockings and hard eyes and flaring rouge who frightened and discomfited older men. But a sweet, truthful, old-fashioned girl suggesting apple blossoms and old mill streams. Under his breath the judge hummed a forgotten ballad: "Dressed in gingham too—it was there I knew that I first loved you—you were sixteen —my village queen—down by the old mill stream." . . . A fly lit on his bald spot and he slapped at it dreamily. "Yes, Miss Leffing?"

"And so we were driving to the library and Mr. Protheroe, whom I scarcely know, was going to leave me there. He was not intoxicated. He had no bottle of any kind in the car. He was as sober as a judge——" she stopped, smiling in pretty confusion.

The judge smiled back and made a facetious little bow.

"I mean he was absolutely sober. He was not driving on the left side of the road——"

At this astounding perjury of his own witness, the dean's face became red with indignation. He glared bitterly around the room.

"Yes, Miss Leffing?" said the judge caressingly.

"He was not speeding. In fact he was driving slowly because at the time the other car collided with us——" her gray eyes glowed with the unmistakable light of truth "—we were arguing about whether Catherine the Great approved of the Jacobins in the French Revolution. I said she favored them and Mr. Protheroe said she didn't——"

"She did, of course," said the judge.

"And when the collision occurred I was astonished to see another car coming so fast and on the wrong side of the street, your honor."

As she told this brazen untruth Andy sank back limply in his chair. "Man! Man!" whispered Bill in ecstasy. *"How that girl can lie!"*

But why had she done it? Andy wondered in the exultant confusion of his thoughts. He had not seen her or spoken to her since that first kiss . . . and then he knew. The memory of her hand clinging tightly to his collar came to him again and the sudden tears started in his eyes. That moment had awakened a new, fierce emotion in her and with the beautiful unswerving directness of her mind she was being true to that emotion—keeping faith with her first kiss. He realized now that he was in love with her. And he also knew with a strange feeling of humility and fear that he would always be in love with her. He was captured at last. . . . He drew a long, quivering breath and raised his head.

At that moment she had glanced around and their eyes met. For the first time the color came to her face.

"But Miss Leffing," said the judge with reluctance, "if a bottle of whiskey was broken in the road, how did it get there? Who did it belong to?"

"Not to Mr. Protheroe," she said firmly. And as if by chance her gaze wandered to the dean. "I really

can't say to whom it belonged. That is all I have to say." And she sat down.

The judge followed her glance and his look rested accusingly upon Dean Abrams' ruffled, scarlet countenance. The courtroom was dramatically silent.

"There seems," said his honor with heavy sarcasm as he stared at Abrams, "to be a little mystery here about this whiskey . . . those whom the law apprehends as offenders under the Volstead Act are not always the obvious suspects." He toyed with a pen. The animosity of town for gown was but faintly concealed in his indignant pink face. "Dean Abrams," he said with determined zeal, "is it possible that you were carrying this whiskey in your car?"

For twenty years the dean had made red-faced students writhe by just such questions asked with determined zeal. And now he himself writhed under authority like a confused youngster. "I was not!" he snapped shrilly. "And allow me to say that your question is a gross indignity, your honor."

The judge held up a stern, plump finger. "Please remember the penalty for contempt of court." Out of the corner of his eye he glanced at Elaine's grave, lovely face. He was like a big overgrown boy cutting awkward capers for the diversion of a pretty schoolgirl. "Dean Abrams, I shall have to fine you three dollars and costs for careless driving—we'll overlook the bottle and assume that it was lying in the road. And you, Mr.—ah—Protheroe —are dismissed."

Andy longed to kiss his hand, ruby ring and all. Oh, upright judge! Oh, learned judge! A plump Daniel in a blue serge suit and fraternal emblems come to judgment.

Outside, Bill and Andy stood a moment on the courthouse steps feeling free and gay and light. It was a good world, an adventurous world.

"You lucky——!" exulted Bill. "You lucky——!"

Elaine came out and they escorted her down the steps.

Bill helped her into the roadster with touching reverence.

"How about tonight?" asked Andy as soon as the car was speeding merrily along at thirty.

"I was wondering," said the old-fashioned maiden demurely, "if we couldn't drive around."

They were silent a moment as Andy turned into Fraternity Row.

"Deplorable," he murmured under his breath. "Deplorable!"

"Which—deplorable?" said Bill.

"The way the dean gets oiled and wrecks the students' cars. Bill," said Andy earnestly, "don't ever send your children to a state university."

THE END